



Scanned from the collection of  
The Museum of Modern Art Library

Coordinated by the  
Media History Digital Library  
[www.mediahistoryproject.org](http://www.mediahistoryproject.org)

Funded by a donation from  
University of St Andrews  
Library & Centre for Film Studies



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/docu34film>



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JANUARY, 1942

## CONTENTS

PRIORITY	1
NOTES OF THE MONTH	2
GETTING THEM SHOWN	3
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	4
FILM OF THE MONTH— <i>Shorts</i>	5
INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FILMS IN U.S.A.	7
ARMY TRAINING FILMS IN U.S.A.	8
INDIAN FILMS	9
SCOTTISH CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY	9
THE GIANT SHINNIES DOWN THE BEANSTALK	10
THE BRAINS TRUST ON PROPAGANDA	11
SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES	11
SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR JAN FEB.	12
FILM SOCIETY NEWS	13
TECHNICOLOR BY A NEW PROCESS	14
NATIONAL SAVINGS PUBLICITY	15
FILM LIBRARIES	16

VOL 3 NO 1

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## PRIORITY

THERE CAN be little doubt that the British Government is now making a more widespread use of the film than has ever been attempted by any other public body in the world. For this condition of things the British documentary movement can take some part of the credit. After two and a half years of war and two and a half years of campaigning for the full recognition of the film as a war-weapon film makers may regard with some satisfaction the volume of official production now in hand. Films are being made or sponsored by the Army, the Navy, the R.A.F. The Ministry of Information is having films made on its own behalf and on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Home Security, the Board of Education, the Ministry of Food, the Mines Department, the Ministry of Labour, the Colonial Office and the National Fire Service. Films are being made by such semi-official bodies as the British Council and the National Savings Committee. In addition a number of other official bodies are making use of the film for private record purposes.

Thus 1939, 1940 and 1941 have seen waged a successful campaign to promote the use of the film: 1942 should mark the opening of a second and a complementary campaign, a campaign for efficient, intelligent and co-ordinated production. It is not enough for the Government to produce a lot of films: it is necessary for the Government to ensure that the nation's film making power is directed into the most useful channels and that these channels provide for the national propaganda and instructional needs in the most efficient possible way. For the supply of films cannot be unlimited. Already there is competition amongst official sponsors for the services of the more efficient units, and it is not always the least valuable subjects which are abandoned because of lack of available production facilities.

The crying need is for organisation and co-ordinating control. Film-workers everywhere are demanding that the Government take steps to make more efficient use of their industry. The recent publication by the Association of Cine Technicians of a report on how greater efficiency may be attained represents a step of considerable significance. The labour interests in the industry are not only anxious to pull their weight in the war effort: they are determined to do so, and they see no reason to remain silent in face of inefficiencies caused by employers or official sponsors. They see no good reason why units, facilities and materials badly needed for official films should be employed upon commercial advertising films; nor do they understand why directors must stand idle for weeks ear-marked for the production of urgent official films whose Whitehall sponsors cannot decide upon the propaganda line to be followed.

The Association of Cine-Technicians has listed its complaints and

suggestions and most of these will come as no surprise to readers of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER. However strongly some sections of the employers may resent this tactless probing into the war effort, it is a significant and a necessary development that labour should play a more active part in the organisation of film propaganda. It is, moreover, a step in the direction of that socialisation of industry which must become more and more openly accepted as the war progresses. Yet labour must do more than demand increased efficiency from employers and sponsors. It must take a greater measure of responsibility for its own efficiency. In the studios the time has come for labour to question the national value of much of its work and to take necessary action to prevent the frittering away of production power. In shorts production labour must look more critically at its own professional contribution to the welter of films in hand. Many documentary film-makers have become so used to blaming their sponsors that they are frequently blind to production opportunities which they themselves waste.

It is the task of the documentary movement continually to force up its standards of efficiency, speed and quality. It is the task of the competing host of official sponsors to see that national advantage is taken of efficiency, speed and quality and to see, moreover, that documentary's unique experience in propaganda and instructional method—as distinct from film-making—is fully utilised. The varied official demands will never be satisfactorily met without some means of co-ordinating competing needs. Already shortages not only of staff but of equipment are becoming serious. Already the Services are beginning to use their powers to commandeer production equipment and so put it beyond reach of Civil Departments—a course of action which may well be against the national interest. Production bottle-necks at the labs. and in types of specialised film—such as the making of animated diagrams—are holding up important work. Who is to decide whether an instructional film for the Army or a propaganda film for the Ministry of Information shall have priority?

It becomes apparent that what is required is a co-ordinator of all film work undertaken in the national interest who will have power at least equal to that of an Under-Secretary of State. It would be his responsibility to review the film production machinery available, to co-ordinate and appraise the requirements of all official users, to establish production priorities and, by virtue of his control over personnel, equipment and raw materials, to ensure that approved production proceeds smoothly. Such a position can only be filled by an expert in the field of propaganda; it is not merely an administrative job, but one which calls for creative ability backed by knowledge and authority.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

OUR NEW YEAR issue appears in a new format, due, as you may readily guess, to the paper shortage. By using a three-column layout throughout the paper (other than the front page) we have succeeded in keeping very nearly the same amount of wordage.

### Welcome Arrival

WE ARE very glad to announce that Alexander Shaw has joined the Editorial Board. Shaw has just returned from a year's work in India, organising the production of documentary films for the Government and also planning and setting-up an all-Indian organisation to carry out the work. As will be seen from the list of films published elsewhere in this issue, Shaw did not let the grass grow under his feet. We shall publish in the next issue Shaw's account of the film situation in India.

### Stupidity

A STORY is current that several films produced by the Canadian Government cannot get a theatrical release here owing to some obscure clause in the quota regulations. The films concerned include *The Strategy of Metals* and *The Battle for Oil*, which those who have seen them claim to be two of the best propaganda-plus-informational films of the war. Both were officially produced by John Grierson and Stuart Legg for the Canadian Government. It is said that a well-known American renting firm cannot obtain renter's quota for them in the United Kingdom, and this presumably means that they are classed as "alien" films—a pretty compliment to the Commonwealth. We hope that action will be taken to see that any pettifoggery restrictions in the way are quickly removed. This is no time for crass parochial stupidity to prevent the showing of films which relate our own individual war efforts to the world scale of the conflict. The B.O.T. must snip a few strands of red tape right away.

### Flaherty

WE HOPE that Robert Flaherty's film *The Land*, to which reference is made elsewhere in this issue, will be sent over here as soon as possible. All British film people owe Flaherty a great deal for his rumbustious sojourn over here, and few will see without a sigh of regret his Chelsea flat, battered slightly, and exposed at unexpected angles, perched on the edge of one of the Embankment's largest lumps of devastation. Any new film by him is an event, and this one, which deals with one of the U.S.A.'s most pressing internal problems, is bound to be of special interest. We hope, by the way, that in wartime America he will continue to wield his camera in his inimitable way.

### It's an Ill Wind . . .

THE PROPAGANDA content of the financial columns of the Press is always worthy of study. A recent attempt to build up national morale was made by the City Editor of the *Sunday Express*. In reference to Japan's increasing grip on vital war materials he writes as follows:

"But the outlook for rubber investors is not wholly gloomy. Before the Japs came in, it was estimated that the United States would finish the war with "strategic" reserves of 500,000 tons while we might have accumulated stocks of 250,000 tons. Gradual liquidation of those stocks would have kept the price of rubber low for years. Now it seems that Europe and America may finish up with almost no rubber at all."

### "Target for Tonight"

THE NATIONAL Board of Review of Motion Pictures, which annually selects the outstanding work of the year in every branch of production has chosen *Target for Tonight* as 1941's best documentary. The Ministry of Information announces that by the time this film finishes its release in the United States, Canada and South America, it is anticipated that it will have played in over 12,000 theatres to approximately 50 million people.

### Dirt in the Milky Way

SAID Mr. R. H. Naylor, noted astrologer, in a recent issue of *The Sunday Express*:

"Propaganda—In the middle of this year Uranus ("The Awakener") enters Gemini (the Zodiacal sign concerned with publicity and communications). That spells the death of propaganda as we have known it and the birth of a new form of propaganda.

By natural law the present forms of propaganda must finally defeat themselves. The day will soon come when the leaflet will fail, the loudspeaker blade in vain, the propagandists short unheeded.

## GETTING THEM SHOWN

A survey of the huge distribution of propaganda and instructional films which is now growing up in Great Britain as part of the national war effort.

TO produce good films for purposes of information and propaganda is only half the job. In addition to ensuring the right subject-matter and efficient and speedy production it is vitally important to see that the distribution machinery is working properly. Propagandists should always be able to answer the questions: (a) Are your films reaching the largest number of people in general? and (b) are they, when made for special purposes, reaching the right groups of people?

The answers to these questions are not always as easy as might be thought, particularly as regards the circulation of films overseas. The British Council Films Committee has never been able to satisfy questioners as to the extent and quality of its overseas

When that moment comes—and it will come while Uranus is in Gemini, i.e. 1942-1949—propaganda may roar, but the public mind will heed not.

Various consequences will follow:

(1) The whole propaganda machinery of dictatorship—under whatever name that dictatorship masquerades—will unaccountably become non-effective.

(2) Hence a desperate attempt everywhere to muzzle free speech and constructive criticism; in the hope of giving new life to old methods of shaping mass opinion.

(3) Political and business psychologists will have to invent new and more subtle forms of propaganda and advertising."

We hope the M.O.I. and the documentary movement will jointly note this prophecy, and make arrangements for an appropriate Witches' Sabbath to be held in Russell Square, D.N.L., for its part, is prepared to exert itself no less fully in casting runes than it does in casting aspersions.

### Allied Propaganda Needs

WE DEAL in this issue with the need for national co-ordination of film propaganda. This is an issue of vital importance matched only by a new need arising from the clarification of the international situation caused by the Japanese aggression. The Allied Front is now world-wide, and it is clear that not only must each nation look carefully to the efficiency of its propaganda machinery but also that the Allied Powers must immediately co-ordinate their individual propaganda efforts. It is all to the good to learn that an information department has been set up in Chungking, but it is to be hoped that this department will not find itself working in a vacuum. It is a case for joint action by Britain, the Dominions, the United States, the U.S.S.R., China, and those governments of allies temporarily overrun by the Nazis.

distribution. We doubt, for that matter, how far the M.O.I. can be absolutely sure of its overseas coverage, although it must obviously have a number of facts and figures at its disposal. The difficulty here, of course, is that it is easy enough to send a number of prints, lavenders and negatives to various parts of the world, and it is also comparatively simple to get estimates of the numbers of shows given. But the numbers and type of the audiences are much more difficult to come by. A list of showings in, say, Turkey or Egypt, may look imposing, although in fact the film may only have been shown to limited audiences at Embassy soirées or such like.

The only solution to this problem is the

appointment of officers overseas with some knowledge and training in the field of films. This has in some cases been done—notably in New York—but there still appears to be too much reliance on “the usual diplomatic channels” which provide all too little understanding of the problems involved.

Nevertheless everyone will agree that in this country the M.O.I.'s distribution system has been sensibly planned and carried out. The five minute films reach a known audience of ordinary film goers, even if there are some doubts as to how many exhibitors are keeping fully to the letter of the C.E.A. agreement. And the non-theatrical scheme, created and run by acknowledged experts and pioneers in this field of distribution, is working admirably. The only difficulty here is, apparently, to achieve a supply of sub-standard prints sufficiently big to meet the constantly increasing demand, although the Treasury appears to have been far from miserly in its grants for distribution.

The M.O.I., however, is only a part of the distribution picture. The bulk of the nation's youth is in uniform, and films are being increasingly used for training purposes as well as for general education and for entertainment. This type of distribution is largely in control of the Services themselves, and, although it is difficult for civilians to obtain a full picture of the situation, it is widely felt that the distribution situation in the Services is by no means satisfactory.

We are not at the moment concerned with the question of whether service training films are good or bad (in general they appear to be a pretty mixed bunch). We are concerned with the questions: “Are training films, when made, used properly? And are they seen by the right trainees at the right time and at the correct intervals in the curriculum?”

While it is, as we have found out, difficult to obtain official answers to these and similar queries, there does appear to be a good deal of doubt as to whether they can at present be satisfactorily answered. It is said (and we are speaking of the Services in general) that the conditions of projection are not always satisfactory. If the screen image is too dark and the sound is distorted the best training film in the world is not worth showing. It would appear, moreover, that many Service men have never seen any training films. There are, too, doubts as to whether commanding officers fully appreciate that films must either be properly used or not at all. It is no use showing a unit a ten-reel film in one long session when it has been specially produced to be shown reel by reel at ten different stages of training.

Have the Services taken the distribution problem seriously enough? Have they realised that distribution is a creative as well as a technical job? Are experts in distribution being employed, and are they in positions of sufficient authority? These and similar questions are being widely asked, and it would seem that a strict investigation into

distribution methods, projection conditions, and their whole relationship to training and educational activities, is now overdue.

Most in the public eye at present is the Army. The War Office has established a complete department to deal with the production and distribution of training films. This department (on whose production activities we have more than once had occasion to comment) is operating on a large scale, and considerable public monies are involved.

A statement has now been issued by the War Office to explain the respective functions of the Director of Army Kinematography (Paul Kimberley) and the Army Film Unit, which is controlled by the Director of Public Relations. This statement makes it clear that Kimberley is responsible for the production of Army films for instructional and training purposes and also for the supply, distribution and maintenance of all projectors and film prints (including those which are for purely recreational purposes) required by the Army. On the other hand the Director of Public Relations remains in charge of the Army Film Unit, whose job it is to supply “film material about the Army” (sic) for public cinema distribution. The statement emphasises that the Army Film Unit “is concerned with propaganda and Army publicity and therefore very closely related to the Films Division of the Ministry of Information.”

From all this it would appear that Kimberley has been whisking his new broom around to some purpose, and that in the process he has much strengthened the hand of his own department, since, in addition to training films made by Trade Units, he has now formed an Army Kinematograph Service Film Unit to undertake training work. The means of staffing this Unit are, we gather, already causing some heartburns in the cinema trade.

In a further statement it is announced that the War Office Kinematograph Department will within two months have 150 35-mm. mobile units supplied with generating sets and two projectors, and also 400 16-mm. mobile vans, half of which are completely self-contained and can give shows anywhere and the other half equipped to plug into main supplies. It is also stated that 200 static units are installed in training centres. Between 60 and 70 per cent of this equipment already exists.

Thus the War Office Cinematograph Department will shortly have at its disposal an enormous number of projectors. The statement continues: “It is intended to use this apparatus primarily for educational purposes, but half the time it will be available for entertainment purposes, and arrangements are being made for the supply of films.”

This evidence of the widespread distribution organisation which is being set up by the War Office will naturally be welcomed in all quarters. It must be confessed

that we are still somewhat in the dark as to the actual organisational system by which the right training films are to be supplied to the right units at the right time. It is to be hoped that the Director of Army Kinematography will find himself well supplied with experts in non-theatrical distribution, and that he will bear closely in mind that in addition to the technical problems there are also creative problems in any use of films for this type of showing.

To-day, great improvements are being made in Army Education, and facilities for spare time study are being greatly extended. Sub-standard film shows could be of great value, particularly in relation to discussion groups and study circles, both of which are being encouraged by the Army Education authorities. Films for this purpose must of course be drawn from the same sources as those used by civilians, but those Army Education officers who attempt to do this are apparently finding it difficult to obtain copies of the films they require owing, no doubt, to the immense civilian demand for non-theatrical film prints. There would appear to be a strong case for the War Office to make a separate grant to the Central Film Library, so that copies of important films shall be readily available to Service Units on an exclusive basis.

It is of course doubtful whether some Education Officers fully realise the number and variety of films which are available from the three Central Film Library catalogues, from the Petroleum Films Bureau, and from the Gas Association—to say nothing of films which can be hired from commercial agencies. In some cases it would appear that Command Education Officers have a number of copies of films at their disposal, but some of these do not always seem to be well chosen nor the catalogues well laid out. (Hence the misunderstanding by which a Russian lecture was illustrated by a film entitled *The Red Army* which turned out to be concerned with the life and habits of the domestic bed-bug.)

Nothing could be more striking than the immense expansion of the whole non-theatrical field during the last two years. In addition to the army activities already referred to the Ministry of Information has 100 vans giving non-theatrical shows (to say nothing of its constant supply of films to people who already have their own projectors) and, although figures are apparently not available, both the Navy and the Royal Air Force must also have a considerable number of projectors.

The capital investment represented by these activities is pretty large; but it is also of incalculable value. When the war is over we shall as a nation have in our possession one of the most powerful weapons of public education imaginable. All the more reason therefore for ensuring that distribution should be efficiently and also imaginatively carried out here and now.



## FILMS OF GREAT BRITAIN LIMITED

PRODUCED  
IN  
**1941**

### SIMPLIFIED FIRST AID

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY OUTDOOR COOKING

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION / MINISTRY OF FOOD

### GOVERNMENT TRAINING COURSES TRAILER

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION / MINISTRY OF LABOUR

### SURPRISE BROADCAST

FOR ANDREW BUCHANAN PRODUCTIONS

### YOUTH TAKES A HAND

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION / BOARD OF EDUCATION

### LONDON, AUTUMN, 1941 (In Spanish, Brazilian & English)

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

### HOT ON THE SPOT

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION / MINISTRY OF FOOD

### HEATING ECONOMY TRAILER

### COOKING ECONOMY TRAILER

### HOT WATER ECONOMY TRAILER

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION / MINES DEPARTMENT

### GRATE DAYS TO GREATER DAYS

FOR BRITISH FILMS LIMITED

### HE WENT TO THE CUPBOARD

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION / MINISTRY OF FOOD

Managing Director

**ANDREW BUCHANAN**

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

*W.V.S. Production: Verity Films. Direction: Louise Birt. Camera: George Plowman. Music: William Alwyn. 19 minutes.*

*Subject: Mary Welsh, an American newspaper writer, is looking for a story about the W.V.S. She interviews Lady Reading and subsequently pieces together, at her typewriter, a few of the seemingly innumerable jobs that the volunteers in this Service perform.*

They organise sorting depots for clothes, mend oilskins for the Merchant Navy, look after blitzed families and take care of children in reception nurseries. Every little job of personal service, whether it is ambulance driving or arranging street salvage dumps, billeting evacuated families or servicing rest centres, making hot tea for the mobile canteens or helping mothers whose children are evacuated, is done willingly and efficiently by this unpaid army of a million women.

*Treatment: This film is an extremely competent and straightforward job of reporting. It succeeds in covering a very wide field, ranging from streets dumps to nurseries, rest homes and a Scottish fishing village, with a dozen other places in between. It has a very nice feeling for personal detail and for ordinary people doing an ordinary job of work. Photography is excellent and Alwyn's music helps a lot. Mary Welsh who commentates all through has a pleasant voice and speaks a thoughtfully written commentary well.*

*Propaganda value: Very good. Made specifically for American release it does its job. If it secures exhibition in this country—and it should do—some commentary changes would be advisable. At times it is a little too patronising to America for British consumption. The film is a worthy record and a worthy tribute to a great body of people who get little or no publicity but are doing a job as good as any.*

*All Those in Favour. Paul Rotha Productions. Direction: Donald Alexander. Camera: Geoffrey Faithfull. 2-reel Non-T.*

*Subject: The impact of the war on local government in a rural district of Devonshire, and the steps taken by a special committee of the local council to solve the various problems arising from emergency conditions.*

*Treatment. The most striking thing about Alexander's direction of this film is his use of synchronous dialogue, spoken in open-air locations and often while the characters are walking along roads or across fields; this dialogue is used to point the moral rather than adorn the tale, and it is often very effective because the conversation is intimately related either to background action or—dramatically—to an entire landscape. The story is shaped from a personal investigation made by an American news correspondent who visits Devonshire and discusses matters with members of the local council; but in addition to this, various sections of the film are composed by the council people concerned, and here Alexander has ingeniously mingled actors with real people. This is especially successful in the meeting of the council. The*



## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(Continued)

only criticism of the film is that despite its technical skill and ingenuity some of it is on the dry side—but it must be remembered that in tackling the subject of local government this was almost unavoidable; and the wonder is that so much of the film is free from this defect.

**Propaganda value.** At a time when democracy, facing its greatest crisis, is gradually learning that its future lies in the closest possible fusion between central (national) planning and active regionalism, this film will be of immense propaganda value. *All Those in Favour* emphasises the necessity for local initiative and for the creative action of individuals within the local scheme, without which national planning becomes either a cipher or a form of dictatorship. It therefore has a direct appeal to all citizens who are determined that the post-war period shall be one not only of reconstruction but of absolute democratic progress. Thus within the limits of its treatment this film rates full marks for propaganda.

**War in the East.** *Production:* Shell Film Unit. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** The situation in the Far East after Japan's aggression. Strategic points, sea distances, and possible moves and counter-moves by the various forces are described.

**Treatment.** Practically the entire film is composed of simple maps and diagrams, often with a lecturer pointing at relevant parts of the map or illustrating comparative distances with a ruler. The argument is succinctly and vividly expressed and remains fully up-to-date despite the fall of Hongkong. It is especially noteworthy that the whole film was made in eight days, from treatment to show-copy, and congratulations are due to the Shell Film Unit for its admirable teamwork, and to the M.O.I. Films Division for its foresight and speed. After seeing this film one is inclined once again to raise the plea for more of this sort—many of which could be made in rough form by intelligent anticipation and be ready for use in emergency.

**Propaganda value.** This is just the type of informational film which the public surely wants. Full marks.

**Main Street, U.S.A.** *Production:* March of Time (No. 8, Seventh year.) *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio Pictures.

**Subject.** Made just prior to America's entry into the war, an analysis is made of her civil defence efforts, together with an attempted enactment of what life would be like for Americans if Hitler were able to impose his "New Order" there.

**Treatment.** This is one of the most disappointing issues of "March of Time" for some while, utterly lacking in conviction, and to English audiences at least, likely to provoke considerable mirth. We are introduced to what is described as a "typical" American family. They are a pretty revolting lot and it is significant that in one of the two sync. dialogue sequences, the father and his eldest son—a corporal in the Army—can find no other subject of conversation than to attack trade unionism and denounce strikes—as if everything else in the American social system was perfect.

The re-enacted sequence of what life would be like under Hitler is done rather in the style of an "Our Gang" comedy. Groups of self-conscious youths march round the streets trying to look tough and pretend to beat up harmless citizens.

Their efforts culminate in raiding the headquarters of the "Loyal Order of the Moose." The suppression of this doubtless formidable body may exemplify fascism in all its bestiality to an American, but over here it's just a big joke.

The shooting all through is stagey and unrealistic, particularly so when dealing with people, all of whom look extremely nervous and very conscious of the camera.

**Propaganda value.** The film does very little to create a better understanding between the peoples of America and Britain and its "ideology" is very doubtful. At times one gets the impression—due to the unfortunate selection of types and what they are made to say—that while America on no account wants Hitler's new order, it would not be averse to a form of American fascism, if only to deal with these damned labour agitators. And once that idea gets around it's going to start an awful lot of trouble.

**They Met in London.** Paul Rotha Productions and British Paramount News. *Producer:* Paul Rotha. *Photography:* Jack Harding. Non-T. 11 minutes.

**Subject.** The 1941 meeting of the British Association. It is opened by Mr. Maisky, Dr. Wellington Koo, Dr. Benes, Mr. Winant and Anthony Eden. Then the association gets down to discussion of war and reconstruction. Young scientists say how much more could be done by pooling knowledge and equipment. Sir John Orr and H. G. Wells speak and Julian Huxley puts their difficulties in a nutshell. "It is no good planning for the post-war period if we don't win the war. That's obvious. At the same time, what's the good of winning the war if we don't plan the post-war period."

**Treatment.** The film is produced jointly by Paul Rotha Productions and Paramount News, and it is pleasant to see some co-operation round the place, for however much the Newsreel Association shout their intentions of being 100 per cent behind the war effort, some members still won't co-operate to make films even if they are needed for the war effort. The film is a good example of a little goodwill and a little less profit-making. It is extremely well photographed and recorded. The story is straight and clean.

**Propaganda value.** Very good for overseas. Celebrity appeal. Maisky, Wells, Sir John Orr, Huxley. Critical and progressive sentiments, effective.

**How to Thatch.** *Production:* Strand. *Direction:* Ralph Bond. *Photography:* Charles Marlborough. *Commentary:* Freddie Grisewood. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. non-theatrical for the Ministry of Agriculture. 11 minutes.

**Subject.** *How to Thatch* is another of the Ministry of Agriculture's first-class instructional films. In a pleasant simple fashion it shows how an expert goes about thatching a rick, round or rectangular. We are introduced to the expert, who looks a fine old boy, his young assistant, and a number of new phrases and expressions, the wisest of which is "yealms" for the sections of thatching straw stripped out ready for laying.

**Treatment.** The film is very well made in a quite straight instructional vein, with plenty of close shots, good camerawork, and a decent human touch in dealing with the thatcher and his assistant. Minor cavils are that the commentary is too stilted and unhuman in wording, so that it is a bit out of step with the human quality of the shooting; that it contains (obviously the M. of

A's fault this) a fair amount of facts, figures and pronouncements that have very little to do with the film as it has been shot, and merely over-balance it, and that the commentator's voice is too obviously smart and twonice for a film of this kind. But these are fairly minor points.

**Instructional value.** It is difficult to say what the instructional value of this and similar farming films will prove to be. Obviously they are extremely pleasant for laymen and near-laymen to watch, and their general message is good, clear and useful, and that is justification enough. But whether this film, for instance, will persuade farmers to do their thatching better or tell them something they don't know already, I don't really know and should hate to guess.

**Naval Operations.** *Production:* Shell Film Unit. *Producer:* Edgar Anstey. *Direction:* Grahame Tharp. *Diagrams:* Francis Rodker. M.O.I. 5 mins.

**Subject.** *Naval Operations* briefly describes some of the different units that make up the Navy—battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and so on—and illustrates the strategy and tactics of their use with reference to the sinking of the Bismarck, and to the Matapan. Graf Spee and other actions.

**Treatment.** Technically, the film consists for the most part of animated diagrams illustrated from time to time with library shots. The diagrams are very well made, easy to follow and have plenty of pleasantly swift tracks and puns to liven them up. The film, however, attempts to cover too much ground, with the result that it presents a somewhat scrappy appearance, with the function of some areas barely mentioned and the functions of some craft (submarines for instance) not mentioned at all. It might have been wiser to concentrate simply on one action; but within its limits the film is well made.

**Propaganda value.** The film is sure to prove interesting to the general public, and no doubt the spreading of information of any kind can be considered an end in itself. Anyway it would be unfair to criticise a film which sets out to do no more than touch on certain aspects of naval tactics, for not dealing with the fascinating subject of sea-power.

**Three in a Shell Hole.** *Production:* Mosfilm News. *Direction:* Leonid Leonov. *English Version and Dubbing:* Soviet War News Film Agency. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** This is the first Russian film to be shown as one of the M.O.I. 5 minutes. It tells of the work of one of the Soviet Red Cross girls in the front line. During a Russian counter-attack she is driven to take refuge in a shell-hole where she finds a Russian soldier wounded in the knee. She patches him up and then, with a German machine-gun stopping her leaving, discovers a German doctor buried in the same shell-hole. She looks after him too and fetches water for both of them. As she prepares to go, the German doctor digs up his buried revolver and is about to shoot her when the Russian soldier shoots him instead, and the two Russians both rejoice the counter attack.

**Treatment.** The film is nicely made in a plain realistic style. The production, sound and photography are all well done, and the girl herself is extremely good. She looks serious and sincere and goes about her business with a very pleasant and reassuring definiteness and intensity. You feel that the whole thing means a great deal to her, that the war is really about something.

(Continued on page 6)

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(Continued)

The Russian voices are dubbed into English; this is supposed to be essential for British audiences (though I doubt it), but here at any rate it is so badly done as to ruin the whole realism of the film. The voices are affected, the wording pompous and the lip-synching inaccurate. If it is really believed that audiences will not stand subtitles, it would be worth while to try leaving the original dialogue on the film with an English voice giving the gist of it from time to time. Anyway it is quite certain that this sort of dubbing on a realistic film is a failure.

*Propaganda value.* The film is very obviously addressed to Russian audiences, with its fierce fighting spirit and insistence on the sub-human brutality of the Germans. The main message that home audiences will draw is a very useful confidence in the seriousness, tenacity and decency of the Russians, with a small by-product on the ethics of the medical profession. But it is for the M.O.I. to try and tie up the vivid front line danger of the Russian women soldiers with the activities of the A.T.S. By the way, it does not seem particularly useful to suggest in cheerful Charlie fashion, as is done in the opening shots of this film, that the Germans, if left to themselves, will happily exterminate each other. However, the more Russian staff that gets on our screens, the better for everybody.

*Sowing and Planting.* Production: Selwyn Films Limited. Direction: Jack Elliott. Photography: Jack Parker. Commentary: Roy Hay. Distribution: M.O.I. for the Ministry of Agriculture. 10 minutes.

*Subject.* *Sowing and Planting* is the second of the instructional gardening films for beginners and new allotment holders, the first being *How to Dig*. It covers the preparation of the ground, plantings shallots, sowing onions and parsnips, sowing the seed-bed and planting potatoes.

*Treatment.* As in the first film it is extremely pleasant to see people at work who obviously know how to do their job, and the shooting and cutting emphasise wisely the rhythm and sureness of their actions. In a film of this length (10 minutes) it must be a problem to decide how much to cover, particularly as it is hopeless to try and squeeze too much information into a small space, but the film manages to give a good general idea of how to plant and sow. However, gardening is a religion where there are no orthodoxes and hundreds of heresies. As this series develops I can visualise more and more controversy arising among the various sects. I hope for instance that beginners with heavy clay soil after seeing the film will not go straight out on a wet day and start treading their allotments, excellent though treading is for the light loam shown here. And for the same reason I don't much care for the business of shuffling in the newly sown rows with the feet. But a film like this must remain simple.

*Instructional Value.* Within its limits, full marks. It is extremely well made, clearly shot, neatly edited and simply commented.

## No. 2 THE GOLDEN GOOSE



There was a man who had three sons. The youngest was called Dumpling, and was on all occasions despised and ill-treated by the whole family. It happened that the eldest went one day into the wood to cut fuel and his mother gave him a delicious pasty and a bottle of wine to take with him. As he went into the wood, a little old man bid him good-day, and said, "Give me a little piece of meat from your pasty, and a little wine out of your bottle; I'm very hungry and thirsty." But this clever young man said, "Give you my meat and wine! No, I thank you; I should not have enough left for myself;" and away he went. He soon began to cut down a tree; but he had not worked long before he missed his stroke and cut himself.

Next went out the second son to work; and his mother gave him, too, a pasty and a bottle of wine. And the same little old man met him also, and asked him for something to eat and drink. But he too thought himself vastly clever, and said, "Whatever you get, I shall lose; so go your way!" The second stroke that he aimed against a tree, hit him on the leg; so that he too was forced to go home.

Then Dumpling said, "Father, I should like to go and cut wood, too."

But his father answered, "You had better stay at home, for you know nothing of the business." But Dumpling was very pressing, and at last his father said, "Go your way; you'll be wiser when you have suffered for your folly." And his mother gave him only some dry bread and a bottle of sour beer. But when he went into the wood, he too met the little old man, Dumpling said, "I've only dry bread and sour beer; if that will suit you, we will sit down and eat it together." So they sat down, and when the lad pulled out his bread it was turned into a fine pasty and his sour beer was delightful wine. They ate and drank heartily; and when they had done, the little man said, "As you have a kind heart, I will send a blessing upon you. There stands an old tree; cut it down and you will find something at the root."

Dumpling set to work, and cut down the tree; and when it fell, he found in the hollow under the roots a goose with feathers of pure gold. He took it up, and went on to an inn where he proposed to sleep for the night. The landlord and his three daughters when they saw the goose, were very curious to examine what this wonderful bird could be. At last the eldest said, "I must and will have a feather."

So she waited until his back was turned, and then seized the goose by the wing; to her great surprise there she stuck, for neither hand nor finger could she get away again. Presently came the second sister and thought to have a feather too; but the moment she touched her sister, there she too hung fast. At last came the third, and wanted a feather; but the other two cried out, "Keep away! for heaven's sake keep away!" However, she did not understand what they meant. "If they are there," thought she, "I may as well be there too." So she went up to them; but the moment she touched her sisters she stuck fast. And so they kept company with the goose all night.

The next morning Dumpling carried off the goose under his arm, and took no notice of the three girls, but went out with them sticking fast behind.

In the middle of a field the parson met them; and when he saw the train, he said, "Are you not ashamed of yourselves you bold girls, to run after the young man in that way over the fields? Is that proper behaviour?" Then he took the youngest by the hand to lead her away, but the moment he touched her he too hung fast, and followed in the train. Presently, up came the clerk; and when he saw his master the parson running after the three girls, he wondered greatly, and said, "Hollo! hollo! your reverend whither so fast? there is a christening today." Then he ran up, and took him by the gown, and in a moment he was fast too. As the five were thus trading along, one behind another, they met two labourers with their mattocks, coming from work; and the parson cried out to them to set him free. But scarcely had they touched him, when they too fell into the rails, and so made seven, all running after Dumpling and his goose.

At last they arrived at a city, where reigned a king who had an only daughter. The princess was of so serious a turn of mind that no one could make her laugh; and the king had proclaimed to all the world, that whoever could make her laugh should have her for his wife. As soon as she saw the seven all hanging together, running about treading on each other's heels, she could not help bursting into a long and loud laugh. Then Dumpling claimed her for his wife; and he was heir to the kingdom and lived happily ever after.

REALIST FILM UNIT  
47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958-9



# FILM OF THE MONTH

**Shors.** Produced at the Ukrainfilm Studios, Kiev. Direction: Alexander Dovzhenko. Photography: Y. Ekechik. Music: A. Kabalevsky.

*Shors* is a particularly welcome film at this time. Not only does it provide a badly needed key to getting free drinks (wangle your friends into asking "What's Shors?") but it's just about the finest sort of film anyone could wish for in war-time. It's a film about war and fighting, but, much more than that, a film about what people fight for. For the richness and fertility of their native land, for love, for warmth of blood and warmth of feeling, for the pleasure of living and the dignity of dying. Dovzhenko is one of the few men who, like Beethoven, at the time talks naturally and unaffectedly about everything in capital letters—Love, Death, Strife, Fertility.

The story of *Shors* is set in the Ukraine in 1918-19 when the local Bolsheviks had to drive out first the invading Germans and then Petlura with his White Guard and armies of intervention, but after the first three shots it's perfectly clear that the film is going to be much more than a slice of re-enacted history. It opens with a typical Dovzhenko landscape, a sloping field of sunflowers shimmering in the sun, with two blooms right in front of the camera. Suddenly there is a shell burst among the sunflowers, then another, and all at once, under your very eyes, the opposing armies push up through the sunflowers and get to grips in a hand to hand struggle among the riches of the earth they're fighting for, with the Ukrainians using their bare hands to ram down the throats of the invaders the same corn and sunflowers they came to steal. There has never been anything before quite like these first shots and the whole opening sequence, with its warmth and violence, for setting the mood of a film. The nearest to it was the opening reel of *La Bête Humaine*.

This is the first film of Dovzhenko's we've been allowed to see publicly over here since *Earth*. There seems to have been a bit of hanky-panky about him one way and another, as *Ivan*, his film of the building of Dnepropetrovsk, never got beyond the bonded film stores, and *Aerograd*, his later anti-Japanese one about fighting on the Manchurian border, which was very good according to American reviews, never got here at all. Anyway, it would be a good idea for the Soviet War News Film Agency to fetch it over now and let us have a look at how the Russians deal with the Japs.

Dovzhenko is certainly an amazing director. He has the most individual touch of any: if you put him on to shooting the life of the ant I guarantee you'd recognise his style after the first few shots. This individual quality, a lyrical, poetical feeling of warm blood, fertility, love for the soil and joy of living, combined with a great atmosphere of folk-love in the telling of the story, is, I'm willing to bet, quite unconscious and unsought for by Dovzhenko himself. I should say that realism (which he certainly gets) is what he goes for in his shooting, and the rest is just a by-product. It is rather pathetic and amusing to see poor old Eisenstein, after months spent on careful historical research and delving into the records and religious ritual of the time, so as to get the true folk-tale spirit

into a seven hundred years' old story, come out with that dreary schoolbook exercise *Alexander Nevsky*, whilst Dovzhenko in a couple of minutes on the screen can turn a realistic tale of modern battle into true and authentic folk-love.

He's certainly helped by his cameraman, Ekechik; the photography throughout the film has a marvellous shimmering, luminous quality, particularly in the exteriors, that it is a bit difficult to account for. It's something like the old orthochromatic or modern infra-red effect, with the foreground bright and glazed in the sunshining and the background lowering off into darkness—it must be something to do with the light in the Ukraine. And, of course, it works specially well on Dovzhenko's particular favourites, horses. This film, like *Earth*, is full of horses; three riderless horses galloping through the wheat, horses sheering off as the shells burst, and coming with their flanks gleaming right across the camera, close-ups of men and horses, a horse standing appreciatively by as his master and friend have a drink together, horses in the charge, with the camera panning with their, not the riders', heads. And the sound too is fine, a very good score from Kabalevsky and full volume on the sound effects, so that you think you've never really heard a shell burst before.

The story of *Shors*, inside the story of the liberation of the Ukraine, tells, somewhat on *Chaplain* lines, of the friendship between Shors, the efficient young party-member and commander, and Bozhenko, a tough rowdy bearded old lad magnificently played by I. Skuratov. The film in a pleasant loosely-constructed continuity alternates between large-scale spectacular action sequences and intimate dialogue scenes. The action sequences are beautifully done on a scale of production that makes Cecil B. de Mille look like a quickie merchant—the opening sequence with its shot of one horseman cutting another down; the battle of Chernigov, with the thousands of tiny figures advancing over a snow-covered landscape that reminds you of Breughel, and the astonishing tracking shots with the cavalry; the fraternising with the German troops; the retreat through the cornfields with dying Bozhenko carried on the shoulders of his men and the horizon black with the smoke of burning villages; the entry of the Bolsheviks into Kiev and, shot with perfect economy, what it meant to the inhabitants—the release of the prisoners from gaol, the pained reaction of the bourgeois as they look down from an upper window and complain of the Bolsheviks, like W. C. Fields's wife of the burglars, that they're singing; the reunion of the soldiers with their families, and the two children rubbing a place in their cellar window to look up at the troops riding by whilst their mother lies dying on a pallet behind. And the intimate dialogue scenes are, in their way, just as good—the village wedding feast with the cheerful interruption of the troops and the handsome young gunner making a speech about love, bearing off the bride for himself and giving an old peasant woman the long awaited opportunity for a quite irrelevant denunciation of her old man; Bozhenko, particularly old Bozhenko, with his studied address to the bourgeois citizens of Kiev, his quick, flattening dismissal of an officer

prisoner, his corrective beating of his henchman Savochko and their drinks and reminiscences together afterwards, his map-reading course with Savochko, and his broken-hearted grief when he hears of the killing of his wife. All this is done with such a broad sweep, with such a sense of warm blood and warm feelings, with such a natural peasant touch about it, that the film leaves you with a firm conviction that life is a pleasant thing, the Ukraine a fine country, and the Russians bloody good lively lads.

There are just two things wrong. The continuity is loose anyway, though that is quite pleasant; but on the top of that whole actions and sequences have obviously been cut out and the film as it is shown now presents a horribly mutilated appearance, particularly towards the end. I don't see why we shouldn't be allowed to see films as they're meant to be seen, it looks as though half an hour has been cut out of *Shors*. Then there's Shors himself: I'm afraid he's not a particularly pleasant character; efficient and forceful enough, but in his scenes with Bozhenko revealing himself as a nasty young prig. In fact the "policy" scenes in general all have a slightly unpleasant flavour, quite out of character with the generous human quality of the rest of the film. No doubt both the savage cuts and mutilations, and the intrusive sermons on behaviour and policy spring from the same cause: never mind, *Shors* is absolutely first class and nobody should miss it.

## INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FILMS IN U.S.A.

EXCLUSIVE distribution rights to the Government's biggest civilian training film project, some sixty films produced by several commercial producers for the U.S. Office of Education, have been awarded to Castle Films (30 Rockefeller Plaza, N.Y.C.). The films are intended as visual aids in training machine shop workers and shipbuilding craftsmen. Ten films on shipbuilding are included in the programme. The distributing company announced that five pictures on the machine shop would be released by November (last) and twenty subjects, in groups of five, by December (last). Prints are not rented, but sold to interested organisations, among which are educational and vocational training centres.

The first two films in another training film programme, similar to the Office of Education's, have been announced by Burton Holmes Films. Sponsor is the South Bend Lathe Company. The series (16 mm., sound, colour) is based on the book, "How to Run a Lathe," and the films are to be used in conjunction with the book. Object is to speed the training of lathe operators in defence industries. Titles of the completed films are *The Metal Working Lathe* and *Plan Turning*. Rental is free, borrower paying transportation.

A new and unusual series of films on arc welding is being produced by Raphael G. Wolff, Inc. These films are in 16 mm., sound, colour; designed for teaching. The arc flame is shown and explained in a simple manner through live action photography combined with animation. Direction is by Paul Satterfield, who directed the Walt Disney riveting picture.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London**, in association with **American Film Center, New York**.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

## EDITOR

Ronald Horton

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.

34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1

GERRARD 4253

## ARMY TRAINING FILMS IN U.S.A.

Reproduced by courtesy of Film News.

WITH an absence of publicity and an air of routine that is typical of the military attitude, the Army's expanded training film programme has covered a great deal of ground during the year now ended. Audiences of more than a million have seen the basic training subjects; relatively small groups have seen the pictures produced on hundreds of vital technical matters affecting the welfare of the modern army. All have received effective instruction in a wide range of subjects. No estimate has been made of the distribution in terms of thousands and millions of men, but there can be no doubt that the Army has created and manned the largest educational film programme yet attempted.

The total strength of the Training Film Production Laboratory, located at the Signal Corps post at Fort Monmouth, N.J., has probably reached its final quota in terms of men, with almost 200 enlisted soldiers, about 30 officers and a dozen civilian specialists working on production. All these men have had previous experience in some type of motion picture work, with the majority recruited from the Hollywood entertainment factories. The T.F.P.L. occupies one rather crowded building, with the foundations for a second already laid a short distance away, and completion promised by January.

More important than the record of completed subjects and the technical facilities that have been collected is the fact that a tremendous amount of inertia, arising in many different phases of the situation, has been overcome during the past year. This is probably the most important of the achievements. Because training film production is necessarily subordinated to the work of all the branches and services of the Army, and is subject to countless controls contained in the channels of military authority, the expansion of a complex unit from a strength of seven men to almost 250, since authorisation of the present programme in August, 1940, presented in this respect alone, a formidable problem in setting up effective military procedures. On the educational side of the picture, there is the fact that motion picture methods used for teaching purposes are still relatively undeveloped, and so the Army, which has had a rudimentary training film unit since 1932, has had to find its own methods, more or less independently of outside authorities and practices.

But officers and men accustomed to the technical elaborations of Hollywood studios at first felt hampered by the rigidity of Army requirements and by the apparent routinisedness of its educational methods. Actual experience, often under conditions of high pressure activity, produced encouraging results. Many training films on commonplace subjects have obviously been of the cut-and-dried variety, but most of the more recent films show encouraging fluidity in the use of the camera and inventiveness in methods of condensation and emphasis. Garson Kanin, top ranking R.K.O. director, a draftee for about four months until released because over 28 (and now

a 51 a year consultant on films for the O.P.M. Information office in Washington), shot two films on the general subject of gas defence, and turned in reels that are interesting enough for theatrical presentation and at the same time undoubtedly successful in carrying a clearly presented load of specific technical information to a mass audience. Standards will normally tend to be raised through the influence of high class creative work on other similar work being carried on in the same place.

"Men and Machines" might be an appropriate title for the Army film programme as a whole, with emphasis, at least for the present, on the latter item. One of the most pressing of all the training problems is to develop familiarity with the operation of the multitude of complex mechanical instruments and weapons developed by modern warfare. Consequently for each branch of the service, films on various types of machines are in production, having as their subject-matter the operation of small arms, artillery, tanks, searchlights, signal devices, construction tools and vehicles of transportation. Later on, emphasis will naturally shift towards the topics related to the behaviour of troops in the field and the more complex strategic problems.

But even at present the expanding scope of the Army's work requires a new type of film production to be taken up. Men must be given basic training in electricity in a minimum of time in order to pass them through the Signal Corps' courses in radio and wire communication, and for this purpose a series of films entitled *Elements of Electricity* has been approved. The series will be made at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, with the co-operation of the physics department there. Work is starting immediately on the first subject, entitled *Atomic Structure and Ohm's Law*, and elaborate production devices will be employed to make the films both graphic and interesting. Thus, starting with a vitally serious military objective, the Army finds itself pioneering in fields closely related to the high school and university class-room, and it is more than likely that new techniques and talent beneficial to the progress of visual education will be the result.

According to reports from Washington, the Army is scheduled to turn out 370 reels of film during the year ending July 1, 1942. About 120 of these had been completed up to last month. From 50 to 75 35mm. prints and from 200 to 300 16mm. prints, depending upon the subject, are prepared. The films are not made for the general public, and so most of the titles are not announced. Of the total 370 reels 125 are being produced commercially on the Coast by Lieut.-Colonel Darryl F. Zanuck, with Major Stodter as liaison officer.

All films are distributed by 13 central libraries in corps areas. Each of these libraries has from three to five prints of each film. These prints are distributed directly and with the help of about 125 sub-libraries. They are free to all Army camps and local R.O.T.C. organisations.

# INDIAN FILMS

The following is a report on the work done by the "Indian Film Unit", the Production Department of the Film Advisory Board, during the period 18th of January to 28th of October, 1941

## 1. Films Made by the Unit

### (a) India's War Effort

**The Handyman.** A film of the work done by the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners, Kirkee. Its object was to show that the work of this section of the Army is important and highly skilled. "Without the Sappers and Miners no advance is possible... no victory can be gained."

**Seamen of India.** This film is in Hindustani. A sailor visits a village and while there tells his friends about the Royal Indian Navy. "Our job," he says, "is to protect the great ports and the coastline of India, to protect convoys on the first part of their journeys and to sweep the enemy from our seas." The film shows an Indian sailor's life at sea and the sort of jobs he does.

**Convoys from India.** This is a shortened, re-made version of *Seamen of India* in English. The sailor once again visits the village, but this time he tells of the work done by the R.I.N. in escorting and protecting a large convoy. The commentary is written as though it were actually spoken by the sailor and uses village symbols to explain to his friends, who have never seen the sea, what ships, convoys and waves are like.

**Tools for the Job.** This film surveys India's war production. It concentrates on some of the lesser known war materials as the heavier industries are covered by other films in the programme. It opens with a sequence showing the "obscurity of light" in a big Indian city, goes on to explain India's strategic position in the war and then shows war industries such as trucks, tyres, khaki drill, tents, medical supplies, etc. Armaments, ships, war funds and the fighting forces are mentioned.

**Cavalry of the Clouds.** A short recruiting film for the Indian Air Force, for pilots and mechanics.

**Defenders of India.** A tribute to the Indian soldiers who played such a splendid part in the African victories. It was made from material supplied from the Middle East. General Sir Claud Auchinleck speaks the foreword.

**Warfare Factory.** The story of how a large motor factory in India speeded up its production of army trucks to meet the demands of war. The film, while it concentrates on the individual men working on the assembly line, also relates their work to the Indian war effort in general. It also has a brief factory A.R.P. sequence.

**Armoured Cars.** Made out of Indian steel, built by Indian workmen, armoured cars are being produced in India. The film shows the making of the steel, the marking out and cutting, and the assembling and building of the cars. It ends with a sequence showing armoured cars carrying out mass manoeuvres on service in the war zone.

**Railway Workshops.** This film has two objects. One to show that India has great engineering workshops and skilled technicians working in them. The other to show that Indian factories can still keep up their essential services and yet make room for direct war production. Here we see the repairing and re-making of railway engines as well as the production of shell cases, fuses, gun rings and precision gauges.

### (b) Might of the Commonwealth

*The films under this general title are made out of newsreel material from Movietone and Cairo War Pictorial News. They are intended for rural audiences. There is a written commentary with each film in English and Hindustani.*

**Our Navy.** A survey of Britain's sea power. We show the battle with the Graf Spee, the Mediterranean Fleet and the Fleet Air Arm in action from an aircraft carrier. We see destroyers, battleships and convoy work in the Atlantic.

**Our Air Force.** This film shows the training of pilots; a Bomber Command; a Fighter Command; anti-aircraft defences, and ends with an air battle over Britain.

**New Weapons.** Here we see mobile Bren gun units, tanks, big guns and mobile anti-aircraft guns. The final sequence shows the training of paratroopers and ends with a mass jump.

**Comrades-in-Arms.** This film shows the people who are fighting together with Britain against the enemy. Indians, Australians, Canadians, South Africans, Poles, Czechs, Norwegians and Free French. At the end America too is helping us by supplying us with the weapons of war.

**Thrills!** This is a film made up of stunt sequences and is intended for entertainment purposes.

### (c) Documentaries on Modern India

**Made in India.** This is a film showing the industrialisation of India. It takes as its theme the suggestion that part of the solution of the great economic difficulties of India lies in rapid industrialisation. But it points out that at the same time the village industries have an important part to play in the life of the country. The village industries shown are spinning, weaving, paper-making and tanning. The large scale industries in the film are: Bata Shoe Factory, Titagbur Paper Mills, Associated Cement and Tata Iron and Steel. Also shown are aeroplane and ship-building and the new chemical works in Kathiawar. The film is based on chapters of Mino Masani's book "Our India."

**The Women of India.** The Indian woman of today is no longer a person of veils and shadows. She is playing her part in the modern world, and this film shows some of her activities. It starts with a country wedding, shows women in offices and shops, women in the professions and women in the entertainment world. We then see women organising and a session of the All-India Women's Conference, and some of the important work which is being done by the progressive women among the poorer sections of the community.

**Modern India.** This film contrasts the India of the country and of the villages with the India of the cities and of the sciences. We see a typical Indian village, the village school, the village doctor and some of the village entertainments such as the performing bear and a troop of marionettes. The film moves to modern India and we see the ballroom of a big hotel in Bombay. The film then surveys progress in India today in the fields of Agriculture, Medicine, Scientific Agriculture and new industries. The film ends in a modern school.

## 2. Films Produced through Burmah Shell Calcutta

**The Grand Trunk Road.** This is a film of transport in India. It takes as its theme the story of "The Grand Trunk Road" and shows how this road serves industry, tourist traffic, places of pilgrimage, and the villages.

## 3. Edited Items supplied to Messrs. 1941 Century Fox for their Newsreel

Italian prisoners being landed at Bombay.

All India Cattle Show, New Delhi.  
Census.

4. Films made by the Studios, on which the "Indian Film Unit" worked at various stages  
**Here Comes the Letter.**

**The Awakening.**

**Towards India's Defence.**

**Careless Talk.**

**Nazi Rule.**

## 5. Films in Production

**Defence India's.** Material for this film has all been shot, except for an Indian Air Force sequence which it is hoped to include.

**'V' for Victory.** This film has been scripted and scheduled to go into production.

**A Day in the Life of a District Officer.** This film is to show the work done by an Indian District Officer. After consultation with the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, shooting will start.

**Agriculture.** A film on modern scientific agriculture in India. Some of the material has been shot and research work has been done on the whole subject. It is to show how agricultural developments help villages and it is to include a sequence on the Sukkur Barrage.

# SCOTTISH CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY

ONE of the features of the educational film movement in Scotland during the past three years has been the tremendous expansion of the Scottish Central Film Library. The increase of output is best shown by the following statistics giving the number of films despatched each month from the Library since it began operations in March, 1939.

	1939	1940	1941
January	—	356	1,406
February	—	467	1,706
March	87	512	1,931
April	54	489	1,217
May	183	706	1,500
June	179	696	1,662
July	17	195	786
August	35	106	727
September	74	432	1,181
October	183	1,104	2,533
November	286	1,476	3,302
December	353	1,403	not yet available

The Library's growth is the more remarkable in view of the fact that it has operated throughout under the severe handicaps occasioned by the war.

# THE GIANT SHINNIES DOWN THE BEANSTALK

By THEODORE STRAUSS

An interview with Robert Flaherty reprinted from the New York paper "P.M."

THE GIANT was in a jovial mood. Despite the fact that a commiserating waiter was bringing distressing minute-by-minute reports on the backward progress of the Dodgers, Robert Flaherty continued to scatter his dollars like chaff—probably to bolster his own failing confidence—in even money on "dem bums." But when the cataclysmic blow finally fell, Mr. Flaherty's shaggy white head was only momentarily bowed. Raising his flagon with a full-blooded oath that would have rent the veil in a tabernacle he was shortly launched on the reasons why Hollywood morticians are the wildest *entrepreneurs* at large. Laughter shook his mighty frame like an inner tempest. The Dodgers

had lost? "I am absolutely heartbroken," he said sincerely, but already his mirth was erupting. He had thought of another story.

Listening to Robert Flaherty one listened to a great romantic and a great romancer. Put him in a cassock and you might have had Friar Tuck—a great tumbling man with massive red cheeks, brilliant blue eyes and the sharp profile of an eagle. His size was matched only by the exuberance of his wit; he tossed ideas like an agile bull lifts the matador. A born raconteur, he talked fabulously out of a memory shot full of colourful, bawdy and heroic reminiscence of all the places he had ever been, from the dangerous straits of Hudson Bay to the fragrant islands of the Pacific, from Mysore and the elephant hunts to the Aran Islands where they shoulder the northern sea. He talked like a man who had just finished a long and gruelling job.

In fact he had. It is nearly two years since Mr. Flaherty was summoned by Pare Lorentz and the then existing United States Film Service to make *The Land*; nearly two years since he returned to his homeland for the first time in a decade of wandering. It is nearly a year and a half since he loaded his cameras in a station wagon and set out to "rediscover" America. "It was really an exploration," he said.

To be sure, his journeys constantly "on location" were but part of the long, exhausting struggle that goes into the making of a Flaherty film. There were endless conferences with Wayne Darrow, head of information in the Agriculture Department, who, as Mr. Flaherty gratefully remembers, told him "Take your time and don't pull your punches." There were talks with such interested parties as Milo Perkins, and after

travelling 25,000 miles and exposing 100,000 feet of film began the cutting with Helen Van Dongen and the writing of the narration with Russel Lord—a task which Mr. Flaherty said had to be so accurate "that only an expensive corporation lawyer could write it."

"Actually," he said, "there wasn't any story. They gave me a camera and threw me out into the field to make a film about the land and the people that live by it. I was fresh and had no preconceptions whatever; I was so sensitive you could hear me change my mind. So I merely groped my way along, photographing what seemed to me significant; it was only later that we began to see the pattern. The film is different from my others. It isn't a romance. It hasn't any specific solution for what the camera sees, but it is often critical. And that perhaps is the most amazing thing about it, that it could be made at all. It shows that democracy can face itself in the mirror without flinching."

For what Mr. Flaherty met and saw and heard and photographed was often grim. He saw eroded, desolate lands nearly equal in area to the size of Germany, France and England combined. From the rich harvests of the Minnesota river valleys he turned southward, where the long dusty roads were often clogged with migrants too weak to work even if they found it. Elsewhere, in the midlands, he met farmers who boasted of having worn out five or six farms in their lifetimes—and then he saw farms that had been left behind, the rat-infested shells of empty houses. And again the straggling pilgrims on the dusty roads.

But just as ominous was the terrible face of the machine. He watched the automatic combusker that robbed the rows with blind efficiency, the cotton picker, watched by awestruck workers who hardly surmised its impact on their way of life, which did in twenty minutes what it took a man two days to accomplish. In Minnesota he saw an angle-dozer which cleared an acre of wooded, boulder-strewn land in an hour. The farmer who owned it had paid \$6,000 for it, cleared new land for his neighbours at five dollars an hour and was so proud of his machine that he wore a yachting cap at work.

"It is incredible," said Mr. Flaherty. "With one foot in Utopia, where the machine can free us all, we have yet to dominate it. That is the problem of our time—to conquer the machine. With it new modern countries have been developed in a matter of generations rather than centuries. In 1855 Japan, an almost medieval country, sent its first Ambassador to the Court of St. James attired in a suit of chain mail. Today it is one of the most highly industrialised countries in the world. The progress in this country is something that neither Washington nor Jefferson could have dreamed of. Today we stand at the threshold of a great calamity or a great new era. The decision is ours."

Did we say Mr. Flaherty was a romantic? He is. His feet still wear seven-league boots and there is still the aura of legend about his massive shoulders. He still hopes that a kindly deity will allow him some day to wander to the Mountains of the Moon, to the Himalayan back-country and China. But beneath his great gusto Mr. Flaherty has changed. His "rediscovery" has left its impress upon him. In facing what is the most primitive and most modern of our problems he has not escaped unmoved. Out of the scared hinterland of America he has emerged with what he believes to be his deepest and truest film.

## G.-B. INSTRUCTIONAL LTD.

THE STUDIOS • LIME GROVE • SHEPHERD'S BUSH • W.12

Telephone: Shepherd's Bush 1210

Telegrams: Gebestruct, Chisk, London



SEND GREETINGS AND BEST  
WISHES FOR 1942 TO ALL  
THEIR FRIENDS AND ASSURE  
THEM THAT THEY ARE AT  
THEIR SERVICE EQUALLY IN  
1942 AS IN THE PAST.



# THE BRAINS TRUST ON PROPAGANDA

## OR

### A LITTLE PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE M.O.I.

Reprinted by the courtesy of the B.B.C.

**MCULLOUGH:** The next question comes from Mr. Hudson, who is in Queen Mary Hospital, Southampton. He asks: "Why is propaganda so much more successful when it stirs up hatred than when it tries to stir up friendly feeling?"

**CAMPBELL:** Mind you, I think propaganda a very deadly weapon, and in the ordinary way, propaganda has an object, and it is much easier to point to something and get people to hate it, I think, than to get them to think well of it. If you've got something there, say either—any particular thing—a person or a creed, it's quite easy to use words to make them hate it, or much easier to make them care for it. So propaganda seems to me to be much easier on the evil side—in fact I think it is one of the most evil things in the world today. If we could get rid of propaganda, the world would be a much better world, I think; and it seems to be always directed to the evil side of things, because that's a definite object as against a sort of nebulous good object. That's the impression I get of propaganda.

**MCULLOUGH:** Thank you, Lord De La Warr?  
**DE LA WARR:** I think the question is based really on a half truth. We all of us as human beings have our—what we call our friendly side and our more hostile side. Take it in the case of (here the remainder of this sentence was inaudible because of someone coughing) . . . in countries where we develop the friendly side to a very considerable degree, it's to some extent at the expense of suppressing the more hostile side, which then can very easily be appealed to at given moments, by propaganda. But similarly, I think if you took a country; take Germany, where the hate side has been developed very strongly, one hopes sooner or later certainly, for the future happiness of this world, at some time that the moment may come, ruined by propaganda, when we can haul out the friendly side that's been suppressed there.

**JOAD:** Well, you know there is a very good definition of propaganda which says that you can always propagate a propaganda if you have the "proper geese". Now of all creatures known to man, the goose is the most indignant and the most given to hatred. I've often wondered whether that is what's at the basis of the proverb. I think that the real answer is this—that propaganda is successful in so far as it appeals—is it to the highest common factor or the lowest common multiple—I never can remember which—but whichever it is, to human feelings. Now I think the feeling of hatred and anger, and the desire to hurt, tends to the lowest common multiple, or highest common factor. It's a thing which we tend all of us, perhaps to have in common, especially in wartime. Whereas feelings of kindness and compassion, and, perhaps let me add, of good sense and the desire for truth, are things in respect of which we differ. Above all, propa-

ganda which appeals to hatred and appeals to malice tends to appeal to more people than propaganda which appeals to, what you might call, the nobler emotions.

**Addendum, December 21st, 1941.**

**JOAD:** The last thing and most difficult of all—and I have no time to deal with it—our most unfortunate answer to that question about propaganda. We gave the impression, I think, that propaganda was most successful when it appealed to man's lowest feelings. It seems to me that this week presents us with one outstanding example to the contrary, namely, the message of peace and goodwill—propaganda wasn't it? It germinated from Bethlehem two thousand years ago, more honoured you will say in the breach than in the observance—well, I agree, in the present situation, much would justify such a view. You know it is not wholly true, not wholly true that nobody ever responds to the noble appeal. Let those who believe that the Christmas spirit means nothing at all read A Christmas Carol again and read it every Christmas. It does seem to me nonsense to say that nobody has ever been moved by an appeal to what's best or to take the risk of a noble hypothesis being for once true and then to act on that risk. It is precisely that willingness which at times has transfigured the whole face of society. Think, for example, of the propaganda for the abolition of the slave trade or think of the propaganda which has moved so many of us today—the propaganda to fight for freedom and for human dignity.

## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

The third session of the *Aberdeen Scientific Film Club* is now in full swing. Membership has not yet quite attained last year's record, but is regarded as very satisfactory at a time when ever-increasing demands are being made upon leisure time. The figure now stands at over two hundred. A new development not without significance is the affiliation to the club of the *Regional Film Naturalists' Association*.

Programmes so far have included, *Turn of the Furrow*, *Shipbuilding*, *Defeat Diphtheria*, *The Earthworm*, *Distillation*, *Volcanoes*, *Kensal House*, *Sex in Life*, and *The Great Tit*. Following up the plan of former sessions the audience were asked to award marks to the various films. Here are some of the results: *Volcanoes*, 60%; *Kensal House*, 63%; *Distillation*, 85%; *Sex in Life*, 90%; *The Great Tit*, 77%. Many of the scientists

present expressed the opinion that *Distillation*, considered from the point of view of the presentation of a subject requiring a considerable degree of technical understanding, was one of the most ingenious films that they had seen.

The *Workers' Educational Association* have this winter experimented with a film show as part of their programme. On the 18th of last month Mrs. Nan Clow, of the Aberdeen S.F.C., took a show of scientific films to Fraserburgh. Silent films only could be used but a varied programme was shown including *The House Fly*, *Arabia and Isdn*, *Volcanoes*, and *The Making of Stained Glass*. It is expected that further developments in this direction will take place. For the last programme of the present year the S.F.C. intend to show *The Development of Railways*, *Crystals*, *Malaria*, *First Principles of Lubrication*, and *The Fern*.

If these programmes show anything they show how quickly a film society working over a number of years consumes the existing first-class scientific films. Why are there so few films on technical subjects like *Distillation*, and endless pseudo-geographical films which almost invariably get adverse criticisms? Some knowledgeable person might through the good offices of the D.N.L. inform us where the fault lies.

The *Ayrshire Scientific Film Society*, after one year's successful operation in Ayr, has recently expanded its activities and now covers six centres throughout the County. This development has been occasioned by the almost embarrassing demand from other County towns for information and guidance on the formation of Societies. So great was the enthusiasm that Dr. George Dunlop, Secretary of the Ayr Society, undertook the heavy job of showing a programme of scientific films at Troon, Kilmarnock, Ardrossan, Prestwick and Dalmenzell, in addition to the normal Ayr show, all during one week, to test the possibilities of the situation. Result—Societies formed at Ardrossan, Prestwick and Dalmenzell. The response at Troon did not justify continuing. At Kilmarnock, the hall was packed.

In addition to the centres mentioned, requests to be included in the scheme were received from an army encampment and an R.A.F. station. This was agreed to. In all, therefore, six centres with a total membership to date of over 600, are having fortnightly shows—quite a pleasing situation. The possibilities of further expansion are good. While each of the centres now formed will be a distinct Society, it became evident after the second meeting that some form of co-ordination was necessary. An *ad hoc* committee, consisting of two members from each Society has been appointed to consider (a) formation of a County federation, (b) immediate co-ordination of film bookings to prevent overlapping.

So much for the recent history of the Scientific Film Movement in Ayrshire. What of the problems now raised? Of all the difficulties, choice of films will now be the greatest. While Ayr was the only centre, the membership was fairly well classified under the following sections (a) agriculture, (b) medicine, (c) laymen interested in any or all aspects of science. This being so, films were chosen from within fairly narrow limits, with occasional diversions to nature films. What now? Membership of the new Societies embraces all branches of science from chemistry to anthropology, from engineering to dietetics, from paleontology to micro-biology. A single booking of films passed on each night from Society to

(Continued on page 14)

## SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR JAN.-FEB.

*The following bookings for January and February are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association.—*

	Week commencing
A Letter from Cairo	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	Jan. 25th
Alive in the Deep	
The News Theatre, Leeds	26th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 2nd
All's Well	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Jan. 26th
American Spoken Here	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Feb. 18th
Back Street	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 2nd
Bundles for Britain	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 9th
Capital City of Washington, D.C.	
News Theatre, Bristol	1st
News Theatre, Leeds	2nd
Caribbean Sentinel	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	1st
City Bound	
News Theatre, Leeds	2nd
Dances in the U.S.S.R.	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	1st
Donald's Lucky Day	
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	2nd
Feathers	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	Jan. 25th
Feminine Fitness	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	26th
Fishing Fever	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 2nd
Forbidden Passage	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	Jan. 26th
Garden Spot of the North	
Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	Feb. 1st
News Theatre, Manchester	8th
His Tale	
News Theatre, Nottingham	8th
Isles of Fate	
News Theatre, Birmingham	8th
News Theatre, Manchester	8th
Jungle Arches	
News Theatre, Bristol	Jan. 25th
Kangaroo Country	
News Theatre, Nottingham	25th
Land of Alaska Nellie	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	Feb. 8th
Land of the Maple Leaf	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	Jan. 25th
Man and the Faun	
News Theatre, Birmingham	25th
March of Time, No. 5	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	Feb. 1st
March of Time, No. 7	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	8th
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	8th
March of Time, No. 8	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	Feb. 8th
Meet the Stars, No. 4	
News Theatre, Leeds	9th
Miracle of Hydro	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	1st
Playing with Neptune	
News Theatre, Birmingham	1st
Please Answer	
News Theatre, Birmingham	8th
Quiz Biz	
Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	8th
Return of the Horse	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 25th
Russian Salad	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	18th
Scottish Symphony	
News Theatre, Nottingham	Feb. 1st
Stranger than Fiction	
News Theatre, Nottingham	Feb. 1st
The Battle	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 25th
News Theatre, Birmingham	Feb. 1st
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	8th
News Theatre, Leeds	9th
The Farmer's Wife	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Jan. 26th
The Great Awakening	
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Feb. 2nd
The Green Girdle	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	1st
The Serving Army	
News Theatre, Nottingham	8th
This Place Australia	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Jan. 25th
Two for the Zoo	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 2nd
You the People	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	9th
World's Last Stand	
News Theatre, Leeds	Jan. 26th



## STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1931



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2

MERTON PARK STUDIOS, 269 KINGSTON RD, S.W.19



# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

**Belfast Film Institute** reports that two shows have so far been held, both in the Grosvenor Hall, Belfast, which for two seasons has been the only meeting place available to the Society. Although the accommodation has been spartan, and sound and vision reproduction below the standard of the usual cinema, the Society has been able to carry on, and the last two shows have been very successful. Renoir's *La Marseillaise* at the first show and *Chaparev* at the second, were attractive for their political message at the time, and both films attracted many people not before interested in the Society's work. Supporting films for the second show were the Polish abstract *Three Studies from Chopin*, *Northern Outpost* and the Point of View film *Is Illness a Vice?*—well worth showing for its entertainment value.

For the third show the Society had a tremendous stroke of luck. A cinema had become available for the Society's use—a new and comfortable house of just the right size, within easy reach of the city centre. This was so welcome that we are confident the future of the Society will be much more secure. The programme for the third show included Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*, an example of a serious film in a surreal manner, and an early Marx Brothers crazy comedy—*Monkey Business*. The Committee have great expectations of arousing interest by such violent contrasts of styles and subjects.

The **Aberdeen Film Society** has decided to continue its activities for the present season and to hold at least six performances. In order to enable those members who have undertaken A.R.P., Civil Defence and Home Guard duties, and also those in the Services, to attend the exhibitions of the Society, kind permission has been granted by the magistrates to hold afternoon and evening performances throughout the season. The same films will be shown at the afternoon and evening sessions. The first exhibition was held on 12th October when the films *Ignace*, *Tommy Atkins*, *Scene in Bali* and *Marshland Birds* were shown. The second performance of the Society was given on 16th November and the films exhibited were *Retour à l'Aube*, *Border Weave*, *Rubber Kitten* and *La Comes from Coal*. The date of the next performance was 14th December and the films screened were *La Grande Illusion* and *Water Birds*.

The membership for the present season is 352, which is considered very gratifying in view of the fact that a large number of old members are serving in H.M. Forces.

**Tyneside Film Society.** The first part of the season, consisting of four film shows held on Sunday afternoons in the Haymarket Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been successfully completed, the membership being about 750. The programme for December 7th was *When the Pie Was Opened* (Lye), *And So to Work* (Massingham), and *Lenin in October*; and on December 14th *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (Lorentz), *Modern Inventions* (Disney) and *Le Bonheur*. It is hoped to continue the season with four further exhibitions. These will definitely be held if

sufficient subscriptions are obtained in advance, the dates planned being February 1st and 15th and March 1st and 15th. Among the feature films under consideration are *Retour à l'Aube*, *Chaparev*, and *Circumstances Attenuantes*.

**Cambridge University Film Society** reports that a further set of three shows is scheduled for the Lent Term, in addition to two talks. *The Rich Bride* is proposed for the first show as an example of a light modern Russian film. On February 1st Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* is to be shown, provided that it can be licensed by the local magistrates, together with *The River*. Basil Wright, President of the Society, has promised to speak on "Films and Propaganda" on February 8th, and on February 15th Cavalcanti's new film *Reality* is due to be shown, provided that a copy is ready in time. On February 22nd *The Last Laugh* and excerpts from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* are to be shown in connection with a discussion by Karl Mayer and Paul Rotha.

The **Edinburgh Film Guild**, continuing its interesting policy of "specially built" programmes, showed on November 30th a series of Czechoslovakian films, including *Prague*, *Games of Slovak Children*, *Czechoslovak March On*, and the Czech feature film *Pred Matritou*, directed by Linneman. On December 14th part of the programme was devoted to "Contrasts in Comedy" with examples from Chaplin, Disney and Benchley. The feature was *Accord Final*.

The **Manchester Film Institute Society** and the **Manchester and Salford Film Society** continue their policy of joint film shows of a progressive and ingenious nature. On December 14th *Le Dernier Tourment* was the feature. For the spring season, beginning on January 25th, the features will include *We from Kronstadt*, *Innocence*, *La Tendre Emme* and *Alexander Nevski*. The specialised show on December 6th was devoted to "Films of Science" with a very representative programme. Future shows include the B.F.I.'s *Film and Reality* and *New Babylon*.

The objects of the **Irish Film Society**, notes on which we are glad to include on this page for the first time, are the development of film appreciation in Ireland, presentations to its members of the best artistic and educational films of all countries, promotion of the study of film-making, and of a high standard of film production in Ireland, and such other activities as are relevant thereto. During each season it is customary for the Society to arrange eight presentations of outstanding films from all countries—films most of which, for various reasons, never reach the ordinary commercial cinemas. The programmes for the first five years have included such pictures as *Westfront 1918*, *Nibelungen Saga*, *Kernesse Heroique*, *Un Carnet de Bal*, *The River*, *The Cheat*, *Quai des Brumes*, *Peter the Great*, *Dood Water* and *La Grande Illusion*. Representative shorts have also been shown. Recent shows have included *Episode* (with Paula Wessely), the Russian film *White Nights of St. Petersburg*, Guitry's *Remontons Les Champs Elysées*, and *Lac aux Dames*. Lectures are also given from time to time on various social, educational and aesthetic aspects of the film. For those interested in

amateur film work, courses are held at the studio headquarters of the Society each year in which all the processes of film work are dealt with in a practical fashion. A permanent film unit of the Society also carries out experimental production of short films. It is hoped to expand the work of the Society during the coming season in the spheres of educational films, film writing and film making. The Society is anxious to know if any members would be interested in the opportunity of carrying out practical work of experiment and record in these directions. Much scope for teachers lies in the study of the film in relation to the child, and, apart from the development of the specifically educational film, much can be done for the citizen of tomorrow in building up a fine taste in films. It is hoped to build up a library of films, stills and statistics, which will be of help to those interested in the development of native films.

The Secretary of the **Dundee and St. Andrews Film Society** writes: "The first half of our Season concluded on Sunday, 14th December, with the feature film *Nous Les Jeunes*, and our activities recommenced on Sunday, January 11th. Since I last reported on our membership there has been a further substantial increase and the total number of members enrolled has reached a new high record total of 936. It is very gratifying to find the Council's decision to carry on during war-time has been so amply justified. There have been many requests for Russian films, but some difficulty has been experienced in booking arrangements and it may not be until late in the season that Russian films will be available. During this season it is our aim to present feature films of different countries presenting as diversified a list as possible, and during the first five performances the feature films have been three French, one Austrian, one Czechoslovakian and one American. For one performance an experiment was tried of presenting two feature films instead of the feature film and a selection of shorts, and this change proved quite popular; but during the rest of the season the practice of showing one feature film will be adhered to."

**Scottish Churches Film Guild** (Glasgow Branch) reports that transport difficulties prevented the monthly review of Religious films taking place at the usual meeting in December, but the Secretary was able to obtain substitutes which proved very interesting. Four short Ministry of Information films were shown—*Living with Strangers*, an evacuee picture with ample scope for social service work; it was considered a very good film and quite useful. *The New Britain*, another social service film, but lacking any indication of the religious life of the country. *Neighbours under Fire*, the best of the films under review from the religious aspect; all and sundry find shelter where a Rector is awaiting them and starts a "sing-song" to while away the waiting time. *Welfare of the Workers*, for social service purposes this film was considered quite insufficient, and it was overlaid with the subject-matter shown. The speech at the end was over-emphasised and had little to do with either the "Welfare of the Workers" or social service. The general opinion was that this was more of a propaganda or "Go to It" film than either welfare or social service.

A pleasing feature of the recent meetings of the Guild is the good attendance of members, who are taking a keen interest in the criticism of the films.

# TECHNICOLOR BY A NEW PROCESS

Reprinted by courtesy of *Kinematograph Weekly*

Warner Bros. have a Technicolor subject *King of the Turf*, which has been made by a new process, the film having been shot on Kodachrome, and enlarged to 35 mm. The technique employed is felt by many people to mean a revolution in colour work in the studio.

Ever since the introduction of the improved three-colour Technicolor with its magnificent results on the screen, the Technicolor Corporation has been setting its research workers the task of endeavouring to discover a really efficient taking process which would avoid the huge demand upon film stock and the high lighting costs which the triple film camera requires in the studio.

It was obvious to most workers that the integral colour-layer system promised the most hopeful line of research, but that this type of film could not be employed upon costly film studio sets until it had been so far improved as to make certain of correct colour renderings on 35-mm. prints.

## 16-mm. Kodachrome Negative

Patience and industry have reaped their reward, and at the present moment 35-mm. release prints are being made from negatives originally

shot on 16-mm. Kodachrome in a major studio for general release in moving picture theatres.

Experts declare that the technique employed in the new Technicolor process means a revolutionary step in the recording of colour, and that among the results which will follow will be a far sharper picture upon the screen and enhanced colour values.

It is generally known that the Kodachrome process, introduced at first to supply amateur cinematographers with a colour film which, upon reversal, would supply a single copy for screening, is of the integral layer type in which three differently sensitised layers are processed with colour formers to produce the resultant colour image.

## Interlocking Patents

The use of Kodachrome in Technicolor was made easier by the fact that Eastman Kodak and Technicolor have an interchange patent agreement which makes it possible for each to use the other's patents under licence. The new step gets rid of the rather clumsy Technicolor camera with its three negatives, and enables shooting to be done much as in black and white once the correct lighting balance has been secured.

At the moment the subjects shot by this method have been theatrical shorts, industrial and documentary films, but there is nothing to prevent its extension to the feature film, the enlarged picture having the inherent optical qualities of the straight 16-mm. picture.

## Enlarging the Original

The Kodachrome negative having been shot the next step is to "blow up" the picture into three selectively filtered colour-separation negatives from which the matrices are made in the usual way in order that the three-colour positive may be printed from it.

The resultant 35-mm. picture is stated to have a good tonal range as a result of control in the printing laboratory, blacks and whites being uncommonly good with a worth-while range of colour. It is not claimed that the colour is yet equal to the best 35-mm. Technicolor prints, the lee-way is small and further research will probably make great improvements.

## Better Depth of Field

In one direction an improvement is claimed, viz., depth of field. In the "blown-up" Kodachrome picture the depth of field was far beyond any previous 35-mm. Technicolor print, the result being entirely unexpected. It is stated that the steadiness of picture was also a surprise to many Technicians, who had looked upon the 16-mm. camera as not affording the necessary stability standard for a commercial picture.

Another pleasant surprise was in the definition of the picture which it was thought might lose in this respect as the result of the duping and enlarging which the process involved.

Whereas with black and white 16-mm. copies blown up to 35-mm. grain difficulties might arise, with Technicolor this does not exist owing to the fact that practically no silver grain is present, the picture being recorded in deposits of the various dyes.

## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

(Continued from page 11)

Society, as at present, will probably have to go by the board. A half-yearly or yearly viewing week attended by representatives from each centre, at which bookings and plans could be made well ahead and co-ordinated where possible, may form a solution to the difficulty.

A second problem facing each society is lack of sound projectors. At the moment each depends on the goodwill of private owners, a situation tolerable to both parties in the initial stages of formation but likely to create difficulties if continued indefinitely. At present, search is being made for a projector for purchase as the common property of the centres, so far with little result.

The London Scientific Film Society opens its fourth season at 2.30 p.m. on the 31st January at the Imperial Institute Theatre, South Kensington. The first show, which has been organised in conjunction with the Socialist Medical Association, covers "Medicine in War," and further programmes will be announced in due course. Full particulars of membership may be obtained from the Secretary, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1.

## "Living Movement" . . .

CARLYLE defined Progress in just those two words! In paying due tribute to the aptness of the sage's definition the *Kinematograph Weekly* translates the spirit into action. Current events are reported for our readers in relation to the general advance, artistic and technical, by which progress in Kinematography is achieved.

Keep abreast of progress in your craft  
—read the

# Kine<sup>matograph</sup> WEEKLY

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2

# NATIONAL SAVINGS PUBLICITY

By W. BUCHANAN-TAYLOR, Honorary Publicity Adviser to the National Savings Movement, who is responsible for the production and supervision of National Savings Committee films.

WHEN is a door not a door? In the old days of show business the answer was "When it is ajar."

The door of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is ajar—as it should be and sometimes is not. Readers may want to know how the National Savings Committee managed to raise in two years the sum of £1,115,306,106 from what are known as the "small savers." Some of those readers may not be particularly interested, if by any chance it was not altogether due to the use of film propaganda. To satisfy this specialised appetite I intend to deal with the film side first and leave the other manifold elements for later discussion in the special phraseology of the "befuddled mind of an old advertising nark"—to quote that precious bit from a recent DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER paragraph.

I feel I must somehow justify some of the "fatuous National Savings spreads" so beloved of the editorial staff of this Journal. Well, we started on the track of public money in September, 1939, armed with a permanent staff sized to peace time needs. When I say we—I mean the honorary advisory publicity wallahs—S. C. Leslie and myself. And I should add, six advertising agencies—a spread-over which was calculated to give us the product of six brains and at the same time do justice to the advertising business, then in a position of parlous prospects. Neither Leslie nor I were concerned with the agency side of advertising, but with advertising itself.

Professor Keynes and some other economic pundits figured that the outside edge of small-saver savings would work out at £400,000,000 per year. Many high-ups in the biggest City financial scheme put it at £150,000,000 per year and a few slightly higher than that. In the first year the produce was over £475,000,000 from the "little man" in restricted Securities—the unit maximum being £375 for Savings Certificates and £1,000 for Defence Bonds.

How was it done? I believe it was done chiefly through publicity—in all its branches. The part which films played in the record achievement is difficult to measure, since in the first six or eight months we had to depend upon the goodwill and understanding of the newsreel companies. And here I want to pay tribute to them. True, they were a concern already in action and their machinery was going full tilt. The documentary element was still thinking in terms of 10 minute and 20 minute shows. They were still going along in their own sweet way, some of them loftily insisting that that was the only way. The de-elasticising of the documentary mind was a slow process. The newsreel folk jumped in with the shorter short—and filled the bill. Not only did the newsreels help us very greatly in their weekly issues, but they made shorts for us which were realistic and, we believe, effective.

Then came the making of the shorter shorts—a limit of five minutes being fixed as between the

Ministry of Information and the C.E.A. People in and close-by the film trade will know that not all the shorts made for Government propaganda were accepted or shown. In many cases exhibitors, conserving their rights, felt their territory was being encroached upon. They set themselves up as judges of what was best for their patrons—customers who paid to be entertained and amused and not necessarily to be preached at in varying terms—week by week. The big circuits were on the whole kinder than the independents, but even they had managers whose attitude towards propaganda was not whole-heartedly approving. Some averred that the material was in many cases not worthy of being placed alongside the booked material of entertainment calibre. And in many cases they were right.

It must be remembered that the new and shorter short demanded condensation of story. Not unnaturally some of the earlier efforts were somewhat bald, but condensation in all the arts is one of the most difficult processes. How many journals even of the same genre are comparable with the Readers Digest? As a nation we have been devoted to elaboration of wordage. Gladstone as a public speaker and many popular authors established a vogue which is only now beginning to diminish. From a ten minute to a five minute short required a process of condensation beyond the immediate grasp of most producers. Like all experts who had become set they had to learn and profit by practice.

The National Savings Movement were quick to realise the need for co-ordinating with the exhibitors, even though distribution of their products was in the hands of the M.O.I. Of the necessity for informing even the entertainment seeking public of their national duties there could be no doubt. And the cinema, depending for its livelihood on the nation's efforts at preservation, was as much entitled to assist as were the several thousand newspapers which for the best of all reasons regularly published free editorials on Government requirements—recruiting, rationing, saving and the rest. The exhibitor is inclined to the *riposte* that the newspapers get paid advertising and therefore are entitled to give a *quid pro quo*. That is the old and outworn theory. Newspapers do not give paragraphs to advertisers; in fact the average editorial controller resents the suggestion. Of course there are certain mean journals which indulge in the practice, but they are so few that they don't matter.

From the start we tried to make those responsible for distribution appreciate the value of a title—not a continuous label which proclaimed the propaganda character of the film. We sought to get our publicity by more or less indirect methods—presenting our shorts, as feature items are presented and placing the credit titles—National Savings, and M.O.I. as distributors—at the end. To go into a cinema lobby to find on the time-table the simple and unconvincing announcement "M.O.I." meant literally nothing. Even now, I believe, the title of a Government film is rarely announced in bill matter or on the time-sheet.

Since November 22nd, 1939, we have produced fourteen shorts and trailers in connection with War Savings. We have two in technicolor—one *The Savings Song* in which Jack Hylton and his Band appeared with the Aspidochelone and George Baker, and *The Volunteer Worker*, with Donald Duck, presented to us by Walt Disney. We were first in the field of Government propaganda with technicolor. The current National Savings films are *Give Us More Ships* (Gilbert

Frankau, Leslie Banks, George Postford and Gerald's Concert Orchestra contributing, and produced by Harold Purcell, Merton Park Studios); *San Pepys Joins the Navy* (Gaumont-British); *The Owner Goes Aloft* (Van Scott, Spectator); *The Volunteer Worker* (Walt Disney; Donald Duck); *Seaman Frank* (I rank Laskier returning to sea; Derrick de Marney, Concanen Recordings, Ltd., with commentary by Terence de Marney and Laskier himself). The Laskier short goes out immediately on its news value and because the C.E.A. executive after seeing it asked for quick release.

All the material we have produced has been adapted for the 15 mobile cinemas, which are in charge of my colleague, Sir Albert Clavering. A punctilious calculation and check shows that since April, 1940, over eight million people have seen the film displays on these vans.

The press advertising, posters, leaflets and exhibitions of which there are several have played a highly important part in the building up of War Savings propaganda. They have all been produced by expert advertising men. It will be a miraculous moment when all people agree upon the mould, quality and efficacy of any one particular advertisement or poster design. Those in the advertising business are always painfully aware of what's wrong with everybody else's products. But the amateur, non-advertising pundit, who is usually an indifferent performer in his own line, transcends all others in his critical certitude.

That may be why the DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER being in the Documentary line is so abundantly qualified to criticise the work of advertising experts for National Savings. There's magic in a thousand million pounds—unless it was merely an automatic contribution. May it not be that in our midst are several "old Documentary narks"?

## SIGHT and SOUND

### Film Appreciation Number

#### CONTRIBUTORS:

P. L. MANNOCK  
CHARLES OAKLEY  
Dr. RACHEL REID  
H. A. V. BULLIED

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

# FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made.

F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request. Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Australian Trade Publicity Film Library**. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3. sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain, 1940*. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**British Instructional Films**, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; *Pathé Gazettes* and *Pathetones*; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Canadian Pacific Film Library**. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity**. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

**Central Council for Health Education**. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council (A.A.). Also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*.

35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

**Central Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Dominion of New Zealand Film Library**. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

**Educational Films Bureau**, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Educational General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak, Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *Battle Fleets of Britain*, *Canada at War*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*, *Rome and Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Heaton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association**, Ltd. Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

FEBRUARY, 1942

## CONTENTS

ACTION PLEASE	17
NOTES OF THE MONTH	18
UNITED PROPAGANDA	19
DOCUMENTARY IN CANADA by Roger Barlow	20
WAR by Donald Slesinger	20
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	21
FILM SOCIETY NEWS	22
SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES	22
NOTES ON VAAGSO by Harry Watt—by a Commando	23
LETTER TO INDIA	24
LIST OF 5-MINUTE FILMS FOR DEC., JAN. AND FEB.	26
THE LAND by Richard Griffith	27
VICTORY IN THE WEST	27
SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR FEB. MARCH	28
FILM OF THE MONTH—How Green was My Valley	29
CORRESPONDENCE	29
FILM SHOWS IN FACTORIES	31

VOL 3 NO 2

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## ACTION PLEASE

IT IS NECESSARY that the gravity of the present military position of the Allies should be widely appreciated in Britain. Such realisation may be a direct incentive to corrective action. But corrective action will be the result only if morale is high, that is to say, if there is a clear understanding of the course which must be followed if victory is to be won. At the time of writing there are indications that the morale of the British people is low. Everywhere people are questioning our prospects and finding no answers to their questions. The war crisis in the Far East and the Mediterranean is, however, too remote to impel people to an immediate sense of urgency such as arose in this country after Dunkirk when we were faced with an enemy in control of France and the channel ports. Today, faced with serious reverses in far off theatres of war and political dissatisfaction at home, people are showing signs of falling into a dangerous apathy. This is of course basically a problem of leadership and the final solution must either be evolved by the Government or imposed upon it. Nevertheless propagandists in all branches must take a measure of the blame for the drop in morale. Even granted the initial disadvantage of the propagandists due to the lack of lead given by the War Cabinet there remain within the present limitations a number of signs both of commission and omission.

Our propaganda lacks objective, therefore inevitably it lacks planning and direction. We have seen propaganda and information services swing into action on small and limited fronts and without sufficient forethought. Witness, for instance, the ill-considered approach to the second Libyan campaign. The impression was certainly given to the British people that we were going to smash the Axis forces in Libya, and the continual issue of confident statements was bound to lead to disappointment and depression when the fortunes of war and the unexpectedness of enemy strategy reversed the situation. This disappointment was due to the fact that neither the promised victory nor the actual reverse had been put in perspective with the whole strategy of the war. The trouble is that we have failed to develop an efficient technique by which the truth may be told, by which its many and various aspects may be integrated into a whole and then given direction. The result of this lack is that the public's mind is pulled now this way and now that. On the same day we can read in our papers on the one hand that General Rommel is a thug, a natural fascist, a killer of socialists, a betrayer of his own chiefs and probably the murderer of General von Fritsch; and on the other, in the words of the Prime Minister, that Rommel is "a very daring and skilful opponent and—may I say across the havoc of war—a great general." There is no actual reason to doubt the truth of either of these statements, but it is not particularly helpful to ordinary people to be presented with

such diverse attitudes in regard to one of our most dangerous enemies. Similarly the public is made cynical by reading on one day that the B.B.C., broadcasting in German to Europe, has stated that the R.A.F. is going to strike at Germany in the Spring with a terrible force of huge bombers, while on the next day the Air Ministry brusquely announce "This must not be regarded as an official announcement. It is pure propaganda"—(which is dangerously near to an official denial of any connection between truth and propaganda).

These things are indeed pinpricks; but they are uneasy examples of the failure of the propaganda services. As the war progresses it becomes more and more clear that in propaganda the words, "information" and "morale" are inextricably interwoven. You cannot raise morale unless you give the public information and explanation; and our great failing, which is now being thrown into sharp relief, lies in the fact that most of the information given the public has no forward-looking quality and that consequently our propaganda is a matter of a short-term policy without regard to any long term plan.

What is needed is intelligent anticipation leading to much more advanced planning. Propagandists must not start campaigns in a vacuum. They must take thought for the morrow. Otherwise an unexpected turn of events may throw even the most successful short term campaign into ridicule and make the acceptance of further campaigns far more difficult.

As regards film propaganda there have recently been signs that the need for a forward looking information service is being realised. The film *War in the East*, which was rushed out after Japan's aggression, gave a very clear picture of the situation, and remained undated during its period of circulation. But here again an even wider picture of the Far Eastern situation and of the Axis plans would have been of value. If at that stage, both in film and other media, the people had been given the chance to look beyond Singapore and to make up their minds even to the remoter possibilities, unlikely as they may have appeared at that time (e.g. a Japanese interruption of Allied supply line; to the Middle East and Russia) there is some likelihood that many apathetic people would have received something of a stimulus to action.

The long term plan which is at the moment badly needed could be easily based on a very simple thesis (with compliments to Monsieur Litvinov)—"World War II is indivisible".

The background to all calls to action must essentially be (and will so remain for some time to come) a propaganda drive which will get clearly into everyone's heads the scope and implications of the war as a whole.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

## The Fourth Arm

REFERENCE is made elsewhere in this issue to the extraordinary situation which recently arose between the Air Ministry and the B.B.C. A broadcast to Germany by the B.B.C.'s overseas service threatened that in the Spring the R.A.F. would launch a bombing offensive of unprecedented violence. This broadcast was reported in the British press and the Air Ministry was approached by one paper for further details. They were apparently told in reply that there was no connection between the broadcast statement and R.A.F. plans and that it was, in fact, "simply propaganda". This gay abandon with which a Service Department can dismiss an official propaganda statement as having no relation to the facts, perhaps reveals nothing more serious than the traditional Service contempt for propaganda. If, on the other hand, it means that our broadcasts to enemy and enemy occupied countries are composed without reference to military policy, then this can only mean that we have abandoned the propaganda principle with which we began the war—namely that all our statements were to be true. It has always been agreed that Nazi propaganda methods have a great many things to teach us, but it has never been suggested that we should learn from them the art of lying. It is doubly unfortunate that the confusion should have arisen in relation to our most conspicuous military failure of the winter, the failure of our bombing offensive against Germany. Unless the R.A.F. can be absolutely sure that a new and successful policy can be put into operation in the spring, it is a bad mistake to threaten the Germans with heavy raids. It is likely that any tendency to threaten greater aggressions than we can perform will immediately be interpreted on the Continent as a first sign of waning Allied hopes of victory; particularly since our own principal answer to Nazi propaganda has been to draw attention to the difference between promise and achievement. Let us hope that this present issue between B.B.C. and R.A.F. is not symptomatic of any widespread evil, but merely a more than usually irritating example of bureaucratic muddle.

## Fitness for Purpose

IT IS INTERESTING to find the propaganda film being used officially as a channel for statements of policy requiring visual exposition. The recent five-minute film *War in the East* provided what was in fact an official statement of the Government's early hopes and fears in relation to the situation in the Far East. More recently a change in policy in relation to the use of the stirrup pump in fighting incendiary bombs has been embodied in the Ministry's film *Fire Guard*. The first announcement of an important change of procedure had to be made, and since the nature of this change and the reason for it could only be made absolutely clear by visual demonstration, it was wise to use the most appropriate medium—the film. It is clear that in making such use of the film medium, consideration must be given to the distribution available so that questions of national coverage and time-lag can be taken into account. It is equally clear, however, that, just as certain messages can best make their first appearance in the press, over the air or in leaflets, there are some instructions which can best be conveyed by film.

## Medieval Mediocrity

IN A RECENT issue of the *Daily Express* William Hickey wrote from New York as follows:—

"I think I'll start burning thatched cottages down when I get home. Except in *Target for To-night* and a few other short films, Britain has been mainly presented to Americans—both by Britons and by American tourists—as a quaintly medieval enclave, where there are plenty of cathedrals and no bathrooms.

"Americans adore mechanical efficiency. It would be nice if they could be shown Britain as the great industrial country it is; and if Englishmen weren't always portrayed to them in a mood of slightly pathetic whimsy.

"The newest theatrical importation from London is Lesley Storm's *Heart of a City*. I winced my way through its Broadway previews. Possibly those consciously stiff upper lips, those embarrassing heroics, were typical of the theatricals of whom the play is about: I never struck them among ordinary Londoners in air raids.

"The current juke-box best-selling tune is in the same false and, at the moment, doubly unfortunate vein: 'The White Cliffs of Dover.' It starts 'There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover.' (To me, no ornithologist, this seems an improbable phenomenon: seagulls perhaps, but blue birds?)

"Then I went to the opening of the latest big film, *Captains of the Clouds*, a vigorous and splendidly coloured document of the Royal Canadian Air Force, with a Cagney thriller rather uneasily superimposed. There is one Englishman among these brave Canadian pilots who talks the same old stuff: he wants to be back in England because it is all narrow lanes and high hedges and thatched cottages.

"It is irritating to keep coming on this minor misrepresentation when all our lives are being enacted against a gigantic backdrop of disaster: Singapore—the Normandie—the German Fleet—these are blows which might be called crushing, if Britons and Americans were the sort of people who could be crushed."

## Achievement

DOCUMENTARY WORKERS will always have a special affection for the Imperial Institute, because it was the original source from which grew the great non-theatrical distribution field now represented by such a large yearly audience coverage among all classes of the community. Sir Harry Lindsay has now issued, in the Annual Report of the Institute, a number of facts and figures regarding the increased distribution services which have arisen now that the Ministry of Information has channelled all its non-theatrical services through the Institute. The Central Film Library, it is claimed, is probably the largest library of documentary and educational films in the world. In December, 1941, there were in the Library 9,250 copies of 645 films. There were 2,200 copies of 430 films about the Empire and the United Kingdom, 550 copies of 60 films made by the G.P.O. and 6,500 copies of 155 films produced for, or acquired by the Ministry of Information. Of the 5,800 copies of films added to the Library during the year, 5,000 were added by the Ministry of Information, while 670 copies of Empire films were presented to the Library; the balance consisted of copies of G.P.O. films. The Imperial Relations Trust has made another grant of £500, this time for the purchase of films about the Dominions; and a number of Governments and organisations have once again presented copies of films to the library. But the most striking figures in the report relate to the circulation of films:—

"In all, 61,000 copies of films were sent out by the Library. Of this total 29,000 were Empire films, 6,000 were G.P.O. films and 26,000 were Ministry of Information films. Nor do these figures fully represent the distribution achieved by the Library. Films have been lent to about 5,000 organisations. A large number of these organisations show the films to several audiences before returning them. Because of the time thus saved in transit the Library is encouraging this development. Many films and programmes of films are shown to as many as a dozen different audiences before being returned, and it can be fairly estimated that on the average every film despatched represents three showings, each to an audience of between 100 and 150 people.

All this is most encouraging news. It seems likely that the figures will continue to mount, and that when peace comes we shall have in this country the best service of films for civic education in the world.

## Special Version of W.V.S. Film

IN THE REVIEW of the film W.V.S. in our January issue it was suggested that this film, which was made for American circulation, would also be valuable in this country if commentary changes were made. The Films Division of the M.O.I. have now announced that a special version of W.V.S., with a new commentary, has been prepared, and will be circulated here.



# UNITED PROPAGANDA

THE SETTING up of Pacific Councils, the exchanges of information between leaders, the laying down of charters, demonstrates the unity of purpose and interest among the United Nations. It demonstrates a desire to march forward together on common ground. But all these committees and charters are hardly likely to function without a better understanding between the nations concerned.

Our relations with America will not be cemented because of a personal understanding between Roosevelt and Churchill. Russia and Britain will not march forward successfully together because of an understanding between Cripps and Stalin. There must be an understanding between the peoples. We in this country must know, for instance, more of the Chinese way of life; the Americans must have a better understanding of ours. The war is a matter of individual concern to every man in every country fighting Fascism. If we are to fight and work together for a common good, it is essential for the peoples of every land to know and appreciate one another's way of life.

In this country the prejudicial teaching of most of our educational system, the lack of any special responsibility in the newspapers, and the symbols of the caricatures, leave an extraordinary picture in the average Briton's mind of the peoples who are fighting with us. How can we appreciate the effort China is making for our common good if we conceive the Chinese as men with pigtailed, smoking opium and talking pidgin English—a very popular conception? Can the British really obtain an accurate understanding of the American way of life from their fiction films which flood our cinemas?

The thinking of the average citizen is coloured by the nationalist policies of his ruling class. He is encouraged to believe that, say, one Englishman is worth four Frenchmen. This was one of the earliest forms of encouraging local patriotism. It is right to have pride in one's own country, its associations, its sceneries and its achievements; but it is wrong to encourage these natural emotions to a point at which they become jingoism.

All men know in their hearts that symbols and shibboleths cannot represent the people of foreign lands; but because they lack information about the people of foreign lands they have accepted symbols instead of truths. Incidentally, it is worth noting that many of these symbols imply criticism of the foreigner's way of life.

It is noteworthy that where great ideals have sprung from a nation or are the motivating forces of that nation, common people all the world over have felt the effect of that idealism and perhaps subscribed to it. Witness the overwhelming body of sympathy for Russia in this country at the moment,

when for so long we have been encouraged as a nation to believe that Russia was an evil place because Communism was an evil thing. There is, too, the example of the early working class movement in this country which looked to the Americans, in their early days of the shaping of America, for inspiration in the British fight against class oppression.

We have constantly campaigned for greater dissemination of information within our own country about the conduct of the war, but there is to-day an even greater need for exchange of information among the peoples comprising the United Nations. The Russians are still suspicious of our objectives, while most of us here have little understanding of the ideas coming from Chungking. Yet all the United Nations, in their different ways, are trying to beat Fascism and shape the way to the good life. But in no two countries are the methods the same.

Since the widening of the war, there have been many instances of lack of understanding; this, for example, appears in the out-spoken criticism by Australia of our conduct of the war in the Pacific. There has been China's dissatisfaction at its exclusion from General Wavell's Pacific command. There has been the Dutch dissatisfaction at our tactics in the Far East. There has been the Russian dissatisfaction with the war effort in our factories. There has been our own dissatisfaction with rate of production in the United States. Obviously, quick dissemination of information among the United Nations would go a long way towards removing distrust and suspicion.

The cause of internationalism was largely lost through mutual suspicion and distrust among the peoples represented at the League of Nations. Had there been a better understanding of one another's problems, a greater knowledge of one another's countries, many of the difficulties that wrecked many an international conference need never have arisen. (It is interesting to note here that only since America has become a fully-fledged ally, has any teaching of American history been introduced into our schools.)

There have been signs in this country that our Government is aware of this need. Churchill has spoken of the necessity for setting up little Whitehalls in each of the Allied countries. There have been questions in the House about the possibility of setting up a British film unit in Moscow.

In this country we have observed the efforts made by the Russians to make us understand their country and the part they are playing. For example, the Soviet Embassy publishes at regular intervals a newspaper giving great detail about Russia and the war it is fighting on the Eastern Front. The Russians have set up a film agency

which turns Russian films into English and distributes them. They have made arrangements with commercial concerns to distribute their feature films in the ordinary cinemas. They have sent us delegations to meet our workers and investigate our war factory conditions. In a multitude of ways they are opening up the eyes of this country to the Russian way of life and the Russian war effort.

But this must not be a one-way traffic. We must do the same in Russia itself. We must do the same in America; we must do the same in China, in the Dutch East Indies, and in all the Dominions. But the conception of setting up little Whitehalls will probably only lead to trouble. We have our own experience of Whitehall and its thinking.

What is needed is a complete British information agency in each of the various capitals. It is not sufficient that we send publications, radio talks and films to the Allied countries, we must have organisations on the spot to direct their use. Organisations in Moscow, Washington, Chungking, Sourabaya and each of the Dominion capitals, in touch with affairs on the spot, and able to adapt and edit material and with sufficient experience of the situation on the spot to see that this material is properly used. It is not sufficient that press attaches at the Embassies should undertake this work. They are the preachers of diplomacy and ill-adapted to the dissemination of information. Their previous history has not been conspicuously successful. No, there must be complete units, each designed to present information about its country in films, periodicals and radio.

But this again must not be a one way traffic. Our Allies must arrange that they themselves have similar organisations set up in each of their Allies' capitals. The result should be a complete network of informational services which work from one capital to another. The obvious co-ordinating committee in each country would consist of the chiefs of the United Nations information agencies under the chairmanship of the Information Minister in that particular country.

This organisation will take no time at all to set up. It means the appointment in each foreign capital of a representative to see that proper information is disseminated about his own country. If these information agencies were set up there would be a more harmonious working between the Allied countries.

From this would come a common understanding between the peoples of a great part of the world and, in the end, not only a greater efficiency in concluding this war, but also a true basis for any international federation that may arise afterwards.

# DOCUMENTARY IN CANADA

By ROGER BARLOW

Mr. Barlow is a member of the Association of Documentary Film Producers (U.S.A.), and recently worked under John Grierson for the National Film Board. In the following article he is not speaking for the F i m Board, but has set down opinions and observations gathered from his work on F i m Board productions. The article is reprinted (slightly abridged) by courtesy of *Documentary Film News* (New York).

DOCUMENTARY films are being made in Canada—and in a far more organised manner than we have ever seen in the United States. One of the false ideas about Mr. Grierson's organisation is that it now is, and was originally set up as a propaganda unit for the Empire War Effort. Actually there has existed for the past twenty years a production unit under one of the Government departments—the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau. The word "bureau" is properly descriptive because while it did occasionally turn out a picture, its unimaginative leadership was incapable of producing anything that was a credit to the nation as an example of its art. The mushroom growth of the English documentary movement had no effect upon this unit.

Just how Mr. Grierson happened to come to Canada I am not quite sure, but I am sure that he was deeply interested in both the United States and Canada, having previously spent some time in the United States and knowing the filmic potentialities of the North American continent. In any case, through Grierson's prestige and by his efforts the Canadian Government created the National Film Board with Mr. Grierson as Film Commissioner, some short time before the outbreak of World War II. His task was to organise and supervise all production.

Stuart Legg, who had long been associated with Grierson in England, came to Canada as the first new director. At the old Bureau he produced *The Case of Charlie Gordon*, a film about the problems of unemployment facing the youth of Canada. Then after the outbreak of war Legg produced the first of what was to be the most popular and most successful of all Canadian productions—the *Canada Carries On* series, a monthly release presenting in each issue some phase of the Canadian war effort. At present this release is reaching virtually all theatres in Canada through distribution by Columbia Pictures.

To meet this schedule of monthly releases, plus trailers and a growing programme of non-theatrical production, it was necessary to get additional personnel and to utilise all available existing commercial production facilities. Stanley Hawes, J. Davidson and Raymond Spottiswood came from the English documentary field. Irving Jacoby came up from New York to produce a film, and I came up to work on half a dozen other ones. Some films were let out to the commercial producers in Montreal and Toronto, but under the close supervision of the Film Board.

In the meantime, young Canadians with an itch to work in films were taken on at the old Motion Picture Bureau as apprentices and groomed for active production duties, one of the primary aims of the Film Board being to make, insofar as practical, production truly Canadian. About a year ago something of a crisis arose out of the friction between the enterprising, ambitious new film people and

the members of the original Motion Picture Bureau who wanted to retain the *status quo*, and who resented the new ways of getting films produced.

Eventually, after threatening to resign, Grierson was given authority to go ahead with the film programme that had been in development. The National Film Board was transferred to another department, the Motion Picture Bureau dissolved and its physical properties and staff became the production department of the National Film Board and directly under its control. The producing staff was greatly increased, and by this time some of the first apprentices were ready to go out into the field in production capacities. Of these, Don Fraser is now cameraman for one unit and Jim Beveridge is a director and cutter on non-theatrical productions.

Non-theatrical production has grown tremendously and must now total nearly fifty films a year—mostly Kodachrome and of course 16 mm.—doing a first rate job of showing Canada to the Canadians, and to the rest of the world as well—films about Ukrainian, Icelandic and French minorities, the far-removed districts such as the Peace River farming country, Canadian artists, Canadian crafts, agricultural problems, Indian tribes and cultures, transportation, and many more are either completed or in production. One young amateur, Budge Crawley, and his wife, have now become professional 16 mm. producers and colour specialists having produced some of the best Kodachrome work I have seen. They have complete 16 mm. recording facilities.

Present theatrical production is limited to the *Canada Carries On* release of one two-reeler a month, and an occasional war loan or fire prevention trailer. Stuart Legg is producer and supervising editor of the *Canada Carries On* films, while shooting may be in the hands of three or more units in the field. This series has been quite similar to *The March of Time* in editorial treatment and narration, bearing no similarity whatever to the current British war films that have made such an impression here in the United States. Personally, I should like to see warmth and a greater feeling about people in this theatrical release, but there is no denying that it has been effective in its present form.

Currently two abstract musical shorts in colour are in production in Ottawa. One is a "mail-early" trailer, the other a war loan trailer with Boogie-Woogie music. Willard Van Dyke and I saw the first of these the other day, and I must say that I was quite impressed by the work of the young Scotsman, Norman McLaren, who made them single-handed. He does the animation directly on the film—not Len Lye style, but actual figures and designs. He also draws sound tracks that are amazing, but too difficult to do for a long film.

Apart from actual production in Canada, Mr. Grierson has devoted much effort to persuading

Hollywood to make use of Canadian locales or subject matter, and has succeeded, as will be noted from a check-up of next year's releases.

This extensive programme has come about in two years in a nation less than one-tenth the size of the United States, with no background of film production and with little money to spend unless full value is received. Films in Canada are produced economically and about as efficiently as films can ever be made. It is possible that by its efficient, workmanlike productions the National Film Board will be in a position to go on with its peace-time programme when the war is over. It is to be hoped that the public will realise that the Board can continue to benefit its country.

## WAR

First reactions of U.S.A. Documentary to the entrance of the United States into the War.

By Donald Slesinger.

Reprinted from *Film News*

TOM BAIRD of the British Film Centre sat with me in a garden restaurant in the spring of 1939, and we speculated on how the film could be used to raise the human standards, and to make the peoples of the earth understand each other. A few months later, when there was no more peace and Tom was at his post in London, John Grierson stopped off in Santa Monica on his way to Australia. We made the rounds of the Hollywood studios and Grierson begged producer after producer to use his control of the most persuasive of all means of communication to inform, to warn the American public; to tell the world that the democratic way of life was in danger.

By the time the full fury of war burst over London the motion picture in England, in Canada and in Australia was doing its bit. The peoples of the British Empire began to understand each other. And under the roar of anti-aircraft fire something was being done about human standards. The life of the Empire had a richer goal—to beat Hitler in order to be able to promote the public welfare.

War has now come to our country and for a moment we respond with the unity due to danger. But if we are to win the war and later the peace, the present emotional unity must become one of understanding. All the regions, all the peoples of America must get to know one another. Common ideals grow out of friendship.

The motion picture, in aiding friendship and understanding, has its greatest opportunity. It has long amused and diverted us all. It now has a clear responsibility—to use its technical and dramatic skill to help keep alive a love of freedoms of mankind, that will make every farmer, worker, manager, soldier, sailor, a defender to the death of our ideals.

To do that requires a new attitude on the part of an entire industry. There must be no production or distribution bottlenecks. The theatres must be open to essential films, no matter who makes them. There must be a comprehensive and continuous flow of motion pictures to the theatrical and non-theatrical audiences of America. As Tom Baird remarked, human standards must be raised. As John Grierson said, we must inform, and warn the public. The American film makers join the British, Canadian and Australian film groups in dedicating themselves to that task.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Fireguard.** Production: Shell Film Unit. Producer: Edgar Anstey. Direction: Geoffrey Bell. Photography: Sydney Beadle. M.O.I. Non-T. 25 mins.

**Subject.** *Fireguard* tells how the ordinary man in the street can organise his own fire parties, and how to deal with the actual incendiary bombs. The film shows first of all how fire-guard parties can best be worked street by street on a rota system. Next, the equipment they need, how it should be used and what to expect of incendiaries; and finally there is a reconstruction of a fire blitz showing how the fire guards go about their job.

**Treatment.** The main part of the film is purely instructional, with a fair amount of diagram and simple commentary by way of explanation. The end, that is, the reconstructed raid, is nicely covered by sync, post-synch, natural sound and speech. The instructional section is purely and simply shot and constructed, and anybody seeing it should know all about how to deal with incendiaries. It is interesting to see that after all these years we have got right back to the plain jet of water for dealing with firebombs. The film even tackles the subject of explosive incendiaries. The reconstructed raid, in comparison, is a bit on the artificial side though this defect is partly counterbalanced by the fact that the people look ordinary, decent folk, and get on happily with the job off their own bat. It is nice that they put their fires out without calling on the Fire Brigade or official assistance, beyond the provision of tin hats and stirrup pumps.

**Propaganda and Instructional value.** From the instructional point of view this is a very good film particularly in that it makes the job of dealing with incendiaries seem perfectly simple. It is a scandal that it has taken over 2½ years of war before it was made. Sensible instruction of this sort at the proper time might well have saved the centres of dozens of our cities, as it did Moscow. However, it is no doubt in time to be of use to America and should be very helpful, incidentally, in showing them how we go about running our lives.

**Seaman Frank Goes Back to Sea.** Production: Concanen Films for the National Savings Committee. Producer: Derrick de Marney. Direction and Photography: Eugene Cekalsky. Commentary: Terence de Marney and Frank Laskier. 7 minutes.

**Subject.** Frank Laskier, the most effective broadcaster of World War II, is depicted returning to work in the Merchant Service and makes a personal appeal to all of us to give all we can to National Savings.

**Treatment.** Laskier's broadcasts (which can now be had in a booklet called "Seaman Frank" which everyone interested in great prose and simple emotions must read) have touched a depth of sincerity which only a film of epic quality like *The Grapes of Wrath* could ever hope to re-create. This particular film is a Five Minutes, shot silent, with one dubbed sequence, a commentary by de Marney, and a final spoken message from Laskier himself. Its pictorial material consists of dock and ships scenes shot apparently in haste but in any case with a sense of dramatic angles. But it adds up to nothing striking as a film. Its sound track, however, carries two important things. Firstly, the com-

mentator's introduction of Laskier, signing on again for another voyage although the U-boats have already taken one of his legs. Secondly, Laskier's own remarks, which, although in some ways they lack the pure spontaneity of his broadcasts, do strike to the heart. On the whole, it is not a wonderful piece of film-making, but its message somehow manages to register—thanks largely to its chief character.

**Propaganda value.** The Savings Committee have hit on a real down-to-earth as a basis for appeal, and the film ought to be by far the most successful money-getter they have yet put out. They should pursue the same policy on future films. To such future efforts they might well allocate more time and money, since the direct appeal of human effort here hinted at is probably a key approach to even the less-well-furnished pockets.

**Land Girl.** Production: Rotha Films. Producer: Donald Alexander. Director: John Page. Camera: Graham Thompson. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** A land girl goes to a farm in Scotland. The increased responsibilities now devolving upon the farmer have made her a necessity; in the instance of this particular farmer—a definitely unwelcome necessity. The farmer and his men doubt her capacity for work. They fear that her towny habits, about which they are already prejudiced by hearsay, will disrupt the even tenor of the farmhouse. But she proves to be strong, sensible, industrious and respectable.

**Treatment.** Characteristic people and real sentiments have been sought and successfully found. The girl herself is a real person and a delightful one. The conflict of personalities is valid and is validly resolved.

Mention should be made of the ploughing sequence. In this the plough attains an extraordinary vitality. One's hands feel an urgency to take it and join in the job. The parts of this little film are so well proportioned that it appears to run for longer than its five minutes. Besides recognition of the obvious merit of the direction, credit is due to the cameraman for some splendid work.

**Propaganda value.** It will obviously contribute towards better feeling on the agricultural front. Also it is likely to be of considerable general appeal because of its human values.

**A Drop of Milk.** Production: Lenfilm Studio. Leningrad. English version: M. Dennington. English voices: Harry Ross, Gerhard Hinze. Freda Brilliant. 7 minutes.

**Subject.** This is a short Soviet propaganda film designed to emphasise the sufferings of the native populations of occupied countries and their indomitable will to resist. The story is melodramatic and shows sequences of a father's attempt to obtain milk for his sick child after his mother has been executed by a Nazi firing squad. In contrast with the miseries of the peasants in the film we see brutal Nazi officers enjoying good food and accommodation which they have commandeered.

**Treatment.** Technically the film takes a conventional form not dissimilar from early studio-made M.O.I. five-minuters. Direction, photography, editing and acting all are excellent. The film embodies a much simpler propaganda content than is usual in M.O.I. work. It attempts

to make only one single propaganda point—a contrast between the bestiality of the Nazis and the humanity and fortitude of their enemies.

**Propaganda value.** This film is probably of much greater propaganda value in Russia than in this country. In Russia, with the war on native soil, the issues are comparatively simple. It is necessary to eject the enemy and in order to eject him it is necessary to hate him. In this country where we can still afford to be—perhaps dangerously—objective, the propaganda approach is reminiscent of the "hate the Hun" films of the last war.

**More Eggs from Your Hens.** M.O.I. for the Ministry of Agriculture. Production: Merton Park Studios. Direction: Terence Bishop. Camera: Jimmy Rogers. Editing: Cath Miller. Non-T.

**Subject.** This is a simple instructional film in the Ministry of Agriculture's programme on Backyard Poultry. It shows you how to house your half a dozen hens, how to feed them, and what points to look for in a good laying hen.

**Treatment.** The film is made quite straightforward with a few superimposed skeletons to liven it up. The commentary is too hurried and overlaid for the picture, but to outweigh this it is a pleasure to hear a real human voice which is not afraid of making a joke and a good joke at that. The main fault of the film is that it leaves untouched many things that the audience is bound to want to hear about, while, at the same time, going into some detail about more complicated and less important things which it does not properly explain. For instance, the film gives no help on the choice of a breed of hen for laying, although there is a long sequence, not particularly clearly done, about the bone structure, etc., necessary in a good layer.

**Propaganda value.** The film should prove very interesting to people who keep hens or intend doing so, and also reasonably instructive.

**Song of the Clyde.** Production: Merton Park Studios for the British Council. Direction and Camera: Jimmy Rogers.

**Subject.** The Clyde from source to sea.

**Treatment.** There is no cameraman, no approach. The film is merely a cameraman's holiday and Jimmy Rogers has taken full advantage of it. The shooting is impeccable, but the film completely meaningless—a series of excellently shot scenes put together with no purpose. The result is a travelogue with almost no voice—which is a novelty—but it is also a waste of time. The film sees everything and tells absolutely nothing, either by speech or editing, except that the Clyde is a river, which presumably everybody knew.

**Propaganda value.** It is impossible to imagine that this film could have been intended as propaganda of any kind.

**Border Weave.** Production: G. E. Turner Productions for the British Council. Director: John Lewis Curthoys. Cameraman: Jack Cardiff.

**Subject.** The making of tweed cloth.

**Treatment.** This is the story of how tweed is made. The treatment is simple and there is fortunately no effort to impose a grandiose message on to the subject. From sheep's back to the back of a young woman in Princes Street is a long journey, and we are shown the more interesting stages of it. The subtle blend of colour

(Continued on page 31)

## FILM SOCIETY NEWS

THE Devon and Exeter Film Society began its new season in January with a programme which will include shows of Guitry's *Les Neuf Célétaires*, *The Rich Bride*, *Dood Water*, and *Edge of the World*. The first programme, on January 25th, had as feature a revival of *Carnet de Bal*. Members of the Society have also asked for sub-standard showings of film classics and arrangements are in hand for this. It is reported that the most successful film of the autumn season was Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*; to this show incidentally, the Society invited some 60 children from the Deaf School—an enterprise which other Film Society secretaries might take note of and copy, particularly when silent films are being projected.

The Edinburgh Film Guild continues its policy of progressive and carefully planned shows. The Guild believes that a Film Society does not justify its existence merely by providing entertainments on Saturday or Sunday afternoons, and therefore its Committee is anxious to continue such programmes as that given on December 19th, which was entitled "Planning". At this showing six documentaries were shown—all of them analysing various social problems and pleading for a planned approach to their solution. The films included *Children at School*, *Housing Problems*, *Roads Across Britain* and the U.S.A. film *The City*, and the show, it is reported, was attended by a large number of Government

officials representing departments which will be, administratively at least, responsible for post-war planning in Scotland. On January 11th the programme included *Five Faces* (Shaw's film on Malaya), the March of Time on *The Philippines* and Pabst's *Drame de Shanghai*.

Manchester and Salford and the Manchester Film Institute Societies, still acting together, announce a series of shows which will include a number of Soviet films, both short and feature. Amongst these will be *We from Kronstadt*, *Daghestan*, *Incident in a Telegraph Office*, and a revival of *The New Babylon*.

On January 11th Dundee and St. Andrews presented Renoir's *La Marseillaise*, together with three shorts.

The London Co-operative Film Society has now published its programme for January, February and March. This includes Pudovkin's *Deserter*, Shaw's *Future in the Air*, two Technicolor shorts (*The Green Girdle* and *Queen Cotton*) and a number of other documentary and entertainment films.

After a very successful opening the Belfast Film Institute Society began its four shows of the second part of its season on January 17th. The programme was chosen in tribute to Czechoslovakia, which was represented by *Janosik*, and, in the supporting programme, two Czech shorts.

*Prague and Children Dancing*. The *Pal Birth of a Robot* and Rotha's admirable *Cover to Cover* were also shown. *Cover to Cover* has been shown in Belfast before but a revival of it was considered overdue. The February show is to be mainly French, and *Le Roi S'Amuse* has been booked. Two further shows are being actively planned to complete the season of seven shows originally promised. But it is possible that additional shows may be arranged if circumstances permit.

Two religious films were shown at the January meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the Scottish Churches Film Guild. *Lift up Your Hearts* was a short one reel picture with beautiful country scenery. The commentary was good and the picture was thought to be very useful. *Kindled Flame*—a three-reeler—is a splendid picture, suitable for any kind of audience and it will be found an asset in religious teaching. The story deals with the persecution of Christians in the third century and their martyrdom to uphold their Faith. The acting is good and the photography even better.

It is with regret that the committee of the Tyneside Film Society has had to abandon plans for a second session of the 1941-42 season, owing to insufficient support. During the first half of the season *Ernte*, *Le Roi S'Amuse* and *Lenin in October* were shown. The choice of shorts was more difficult, and a policy of revivals was adopted, among the films chosen being *The River*, *And So To Work and The Plow that Broke the Plains*; the last, so satisfying in its entirety, unfortunately proved to be a "cut" copy.

## ECONOMY

*A large number of films are ruined by scratches caused by dirt—or sprocket teeth. To-day a greatly increased national use of films makes the avoidance of waste more important than ever.*

### Please help by:

- Keeping the gate free from dirt and accumulations of emulsion, and cleaning it before projecting each reel.
- Keeping clean all pulleys over which the film passes.
- Keeping unspooled film off the floor.
- Keeping the film correctly seated on the sprocket wheels of the projector.

PETROLEUM FILMS BUREAU, 15, Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1

## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

The London Scientific Film Society is holding its second show of the season at 2.30 p.m., on March 7th, at the Imperial Institute Theatre, South Kensington. The theme of the programme is 'Oil' and included in it are Grierson's *Strategy of Oil*, the Anglo-Iranian oil film, and a German newsreel. Full details of reduced membership for the rest of the season may be obtained from the Secretary, Hanover House, 73 High Holborn, W.C.1.

Glasgow Scientific Film Society reports:—"The season so far has been most successful, and although there has been a considerable number of resignations due to members joining one or other of H.M. Forces, or taking up work of national importance outside this area, this loss has been almost offset by the number of new members enrolled. At the present time there are a few vacancies, and members will be enrolled for the remainder of the season at a reduced subscription.

"During the first season of the Society one non-scientific documentary film was included in each programme. This proved so acceptable that during this season this policy has been continued and augmented, as it is felt that in a programme consisting of from 7 to 10 films, up to three non-scientific documentary films can

(Continued on page 26)



# NOTES ON VAAGSO

By HARRY WATT

(Director of *Target for Tonight*)

THERE WERE SIX of us in the "Propaganda" party in the Vaagso raid. Harry Rignold and Roy Boulting from the Army Film Unit, Ralph Walling from Reuters, Lt. Mallindine for official stills, Jack Ramsden from Movietone and myself. My title was guest director and I went along as an observer, and to do any filming I wanted with the Army Film Unit. Despite the preponderance of film and stills people we were obstinately referred to as "the Press" and at first treated a little suspiciously. No one expected us to behave quite as ordinary human beings. We came from those twin homes of vulgarity, Fleet Street and Wardour Street, and everyone seemed to be waiting for us to show it. Perhaps because of this "the Press" was housed in the decontamination centre. Perhaps it was just because the ship was overcrowded. We beelied a lot at first but in the end it was quite successful as we had a bunch of junior officers and Norwegians shoved in with us and we used to lie around and argue politics and things far into the night.

By the time we were getting ready to sail on the actual job we were quite accepted. Walling, the Reuter's man, did us all a good turn by doing a real "wet landing" on a rehearsal and carrying on in his soaking uniform. We further improved our position by insisting on going ashore with the first landing parties at Vaagso. There had been some vague idea that we would stay on board the transports and shoot it all with long-focus lenses. We were posted to the Headquarters boat. During boat drill we discovered somewhat uneasily that this carried several hundred pounds of high explosive. We were greatly relieved therefore when we were shifted to another landing boat. This turned out to be check-a-block with fully primed hand grenades, so we stayed uneasy.

Going across we shot some reconstructed interiors with two small banks of lights rigged up for us by the ship's electrician. Harry Rignold did wonders with them. All the time Harry was the hero of the trip. He was constantly sea-sick yet never complained and turned out consistently steady, good quality stuff. We used two 100 ft. Eyemos. Jack Ramsden had a Sinclair. Both worked well though Ramsden complained that his outfit was too heavy for a one-man job. Rignold swears by Eyemos. I would say two with a Sinclair is the best, but the second man must be able to reload in a changing bag. The quick daylight loading of the Eyemos is terribly useful on a job like this.

It was really too dark to shoot when we began to go ashore in Norway, but we got the German warning Vercy lights and the shells exploding on Malloy island. I and the Army Film Unit went to Vaagso town while Ramsden and Mallindine went to Malloy. Our party had agreed not to make a wet landing, to save the cameras. But the smoke screen was so thick that we couldn't see how near we were to the shore. When I got to the bows of my boat I

asked the Navy man in charge if it was deep as I didn't want to spoil my camera. "To hell with you and your camera" was all he said and gave me a push. I leapt wildly and landed up to my knees. Rignold was more unlucky and got wet to the waist.

The first scenes ashore were quite eerie and fantastic. Here and there the bombs burned fiercely in the snow and poured out clouds of choking yellow smoke. Through this odd figures dodged. Rignold as usual kept his head and we got some marvellous set-ups against the flames. By the time the smoke had cleared, headquarters had been set up and we started towards the town. We had shot quite a bit around headquarters; so while Rignold reloaded, Boulting and I did some camera work. Both of us were rather inexperienced. We kept forgetting to change the focus. But Boulting did show marvellous presence of mind in turning the camera two seconds after the ammunition dump had blown up and getting a shot of the debris falling on to us. It wasn't heavy debris, thank goodness.

Up in the town, while the fighting was going on, we dodged about the back of houses and shot what we could. We couldn't give any impression of the opposition as they were all sniping from the houses and I never saw a live German except as a prisoner. But you had to move around quickly as odd bullets were constantly ping-pong about. There was so much to do and you were so keyed up that there was no real sensation of being frightened. But your reaction afterwards made you realise how much nervous energy had been used up. Actually, to a film man, the whole action became like the big day in a super production. Although the dead and wounded were real, you were so pent-up they didn't worry you. There were the same unexplainable delays, while you waited with camera poised for a house to blow up and everybody shouted "Any minute now". You had an odd feeling in the back of your mind that somebody would suddenly blow a whistle and yell "O.K. lunch, one hour" and the grips would start handing out box-lunches. But, of course, film people are always cynical of spectacular things. Our motto should be "It's done with tiny mirrors".

Some reflections on the results: Cameras on the warships and aircraft involved would have made an amazing difference to the coverage. There was a completely unnecessary delay in getting the film to London. (We were over 30 hours in the train). The newsreels, who got all the 4,000 ft. shot on the raid, made very good use of it, on the whole. One or two didn't bother to check their facts or the chronological order of shots. But in every newsreel dramatic moments, specially shot for, were thrown away. We tried to make a film. But the newsreels just strung shots together. Of course material shot quickly and haphazardly like this is difficult for the cutter to understand and assemble. The solution might be closer liaison between the service units and the

newsreels after shooting. In any case "dope sheets" must be as detailed as possible. Directors, even if for nine-tenths of the time they are merely camera helps, are of great assistance on such a job. There's far too much for one man to do alone.

And lastly, it's the kind of thing that should have been done from the start of the war. Whatever its deficiencies, the public loved it, therefore it has helped morale everywhere. The authorities said "the Press" behaved well and were even a help. So let's hope we'll get some more chances like Vaagso.

## NOTES ON THE FILM

By a Commando who took part in the raid.

THERE IS always a danger in seeing a film, or reading a book, about something or somebody, one knows well—a danger of being too critical, of selecting petty faults and overlooking the real issues. This danger does not exist where the newsreel of the Vaagso raid is concerned.

However critically one views this brief crystallisation in a matter of minutes of an operation which lasted several hours, one cannot escape the authentic note. Here is an exciting operation vividly and accurately presented without touching up and with no feeling of over-dramatisation. Here, to those of us who were privileged to be present, is the real thing. The impression of careful planning, the rising tide of preparation, the silent wait for zero hour, the scramble ashore through the smoke, the bitterness of that brief, tense action ashore, the determined resistance in the spell of street-fighting, and the pall of destruction which finally hung over that once quiet fiord—these things move swiftly and surely in this film. Even those who lived through those swift excitement-packed hours cannot see this film without thrilling again to the sight of the destroyers moving up the fiord or the sound of the bagpipes coming suddenly and unexpectedly over the water. What we do not see—and for obvious reasons—is the cameramen at work. The astonishment of heavily armed commando men who watched the "film men" going about their work, often completely unprotected except for the inevitable tin-hat, was amusing to see. When one is seeking cover from bullets by crouching behind a wall, it is rather disturbing to see a gallant spirit, disembodied from his fellows, moving about restlessly in the open and calmly running his camera despite the battle around him. Disturbing, but very heartening.

Perhaps the more-keen-thinking of the public who view this film will pay tribute to those who filmed—though one suspects that the innate scepticism of the public will cause them to dismiss the whole thing as trick photography or "all done with telescopic lens". But however it is explained away, whatever kind of devilment or scientific witchery is brought to blame, they cannot dismiss the fact that this film *lives*.

The value of accurate documentation in war cannot be over-estimated and the combination of accuracy and a lively sense of theatre is so rare as to be more than noteworthy.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 2  
FEBRUARY 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Center, New York.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

### EDITOR

Ronald Horton

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON  
W.1 GERRARD 4253

# LETTER TO INDIA

Alexander Shaw, in an open letter to a friend in India, discusses his experiences in Indian film production

To Purshottam Tricandras, Esq.,  
c/o The High Court,  
Bombay.

MY DEAR PURSHOTTAM,

To write an article about films in India is to write an article about politics. India is now probably the great representative political question, on the correct solution of which much of the future hangs. Enough is being written about India and politics now—here is a letter to you about India and documentary films.

It was you who really wrecked the whole show. After six weeks in India it seemed quite obvious that everybody in your country is slightly mad. Some, but not very many, are pleasantly mad; the others are dangerously crazy. The Europeans are mad because, although they most of them realise the real dangers of the situation, they find it more comfortable to imagine that Victoria, Empress of India, is still on the throne.

Your countrymen are mad because they cannot get what they want—freedom. A word for which we are all fighting across the world, but which has never been allowed in connection with the word India.

The Mutiny, as we call it, is just over everybody's shoulder and the shadow of General Dyer lies darkly across the last twenty years. Neither side ever forgets these two terrible pieces of history; to the stranger they are something out of a book—to everybody living in India they are to-day's headlines. That's how it seemed at first anyway and that, for the moment, is enough about politics.

It was all very difficult for the stranger. Then you came along and, later, were good enough to bring your friends and you showed us what India is really like.

Seen from the ship, across the reasonably exotic skyline of Bombay, the problem seemed clear. To form a film unit of Indians, to train them in the technique of documentary films, to make some films which would show them the way and, above all, to keep clear of politics. Hard work for a year but not perhaps impossible.

Within six weeks of landing the problem appeared completely insoluble. The making of these films, the composition of the unit and even the mere presence of an English film maker in India, had become questions over which film trade magnates and politicians fought with a bitterness worthy of many better causes. The attacks of the Press, the questions in the Assembly, the cunning thrusts of the American film trade could in the end be ignored or parried. And, of course, there was always the ivory tower of Government to retire to. But films can't be made in a vacuum, they can't be made by people cut off from everything except officialdom. The honest film makers must go down into the market place, must be inquisitive, must sense the feel of the people and the lie of the land. They must ask the why and the wherefore and they must co-ordinate and turn into celluloid the results of their contacts and questions.

Perhaps it might have been better if we had tried to make our films in a vacuum. There would, at least, have been fewer miseries for everybody, but I think now, as I thought then, that the whole thing would have folded up in a few months, and any films produced would not have been worth looking at. But it would have been much more peaceful.

That's why I said that you wrecked the show. You held the key and you lent it and thus destroyed the peace. I hope that it did not bring too much trouble upon your head, although, of course, you are used to trouble.

The war effort films were comparatively easy. We went to the factories and shot the films and tried to forget what India's war effort could have been if you had come into the war *with* us instead of being brought into it *by* us. We filmed the great Tata Iron and Steel Works in Bengal, pouring out thousands of tons of every sort of steel. We filmed the first armoured car to be produced in India, made out of Indian steel and built by Indian hands, the forerunner of a ceaseless stream of the weapons of mechanised warfare. We filmed the army trucks being assembled on their ever-moving lines, the production figures rising daily as the cameras turned.

There's plenty of war production in your country, as you know—bullets and shells and guns, tents and khaki drill and medical supplies. Aeroplanes assembled in India soar above the fertile land of Mysore on their test flights, ships built in India slide down the slips to join their sisters in the Royal Indian Navy. Yes, there's plenty of production in India and the armies of the Middle East have felt its weight behind them. We made six films about it and could have made many more.

Then there were the Services. They were easy too. The Royal Indian Navy, for many years a token fleet, has become a reality. Many of the Indians who join it have never seen the sea, but they take to it as though they had always lived in ships just as their brothers on the coast. Indian and English Naval Officers guard the coast of India together and they have played their important part in the war in Africa. The Indian Army needed no film boosting; their exploits in Eritrea alone have earned the applause of the world. The cinema goers were clamouring for films news of them. G.H.Q. did not take kindly to the idea of cameramen attached to the Forces, and English newsreel cameramen naturally tended to film their own countrymen at war. Australia and South Africa had their own film units in the field and they, too, concentrated on their own battalions. For a time the situation was difficult. The Press was full of the great deeds of the Indian soldier, but the newsreel could only show the other conquerors. But now India has her own film units to see that full justice is done to their part in the war. By now you should be seeing them on the screens in the air-conditioned cinemas of Bombay.

There were Indian pilots to take up practice dive-bombing and Indian ground staff to show



that there is an India in dungarees as well as in dhotis.

So all that part of the programme was fairly easy as far as subjects and facilities were concerned (I will speak of the people who made the films in a moment or two), but the really difficult part of the programme was to come. We had decided in Delhi in December, 1940, to make six films on "Modern India".

These films were to have no political slant. They were not to say that everything in the garden was lovely, neither were they to echo "Mother India". They were intended to show the world that India was not only a land of temples and stiff shirts, of pukka sahibs and wandering sadhus, but that it was also a land of great modern industries, of science and of some progressive social movements.

These films were intended as a counterblast to the colourful travelogues with their evandancing snakes and the equally highly coloured travel books with their tales of princely intrigue and stories of tropical, passionate, nights in Bombay.

We thought that it was important that at a time like this, with the problem of India increasingly in the news, the people who do not follow politics, the people, to whom Amery and Nehru are names in some political tangle and Gandhi a funny old fellow dressed in a sheet, should be shown that India is a great and important country. One day, perhaps sooner than most people expect, they will be called upon to consider your strange vast country, and it is right that they should know something else about it than the twopence-coloured picture usually presented to them.

But now the opposition became difficult and serious. Difficult because our opponents presented a point of view with which we could agree; serious because without its co-operation the films would have been impossible to make. We wanted the help of University students, of progressive teachers, of scientists and writers and artists. Their attitude was that the films were being made for the Government of India, that Congress was opposed to the Government and that, therefore, they could not help in the making of the films in any way. This refusal, of course, was not put as bluntly as I have put it, but that is the gist of it. Their attitude was understandable, but was obviously not going to get any rummy played. One or two people were helpful (and they were not necessarily among the supporters of the British Raj), because they agreed that the value of spreading knowledge about India outweighed the political objections. But it was you who really put us in touch with India—yours who helped with all the films, and Premila Rama Rau and Minoo Masani. I hope people haven't put very black marks against you all for helping "the enemy".

Your names used judiciously and with your consent opened nearly all doors. To have a drink with you was one of our few pleasures, to be seen having a drink with you was a passport which led to many places. It was a talisman, not only in Bombay but all over your country, which in spite of its size is in many ways a very small land.

So, with the help of you and a few others, we were finally able to make films about India to-day. We already had material enough to pay tribute to Sir Jamsetji Tata, one of the world's greatest industrial pioneers. We filmed the great Salt City which is growing up on the shores of the Arabian Sea; we filmed the cotton mills

of Bombay and the paper mills of Calcutta. We went to the engineering workshops and into the civil aviation sheds. The mass production methods of the West provided material at Batanagar, and on the Western Ghats the striding pylons suggested a revolution in power. Using Minoo's brilliant script, we made a film of your great industries.

There were other subjects. The life of the villages going on unchanged through the centuries and the life of the cities where science and industry are building a new India. The performing bear and the marionettes, the ballroom at the Taj Hotel and the crowded cinemas, the Institute of Industrial Science at Bangalore, the Halfkine Institute where Colonel Sokhy fights the diseases and epidemics of the East, the Agricultural Station at Poona where new crops are being experimented with, all provided us with subjects.

There were so many things to film that several years' work on a carefully prepared programme would only begin to cover them. Perhaps these things are as yet only a small part of the life of India compared with the size of your vast country, but the work they do is growing and will benefit all its peoples.

In spite of the many Indian women who have travelled abroad, the West still tends to think of Indian women as veiled creatures moving softly through the shadows, so we made a film of modern Indian women taking their place in the important work of their country. Politicians, social workers, film stars and architects helped us with this film, which shows the women of India in a new light. The women argued the political point stubbornly but helped us in the end. Always excepting she-whogives-no-cup-of-tea; I have not forgotten her early morning attack, the faint breeze off the placid sea and the group of bitter, contemptuous faces.

In Calcutta a unit working under Burmah Shell, made a film of the Grand Trunk Road for us—that fantastic road which runs from the Khyber Pass across a continent to Calcutta, cutting through history, linking the port and the factory, the pilgrim and the shrine.

These are only some of the films we made. You were away from Bombay at the end and we did not see them together, but when you did see them I hope that you did not feel that you had wasted your help.

Finally, there were the people who made the films. The directors and cameramen and cutters and assistants who made up the Indian Film Unit, as well as the people from outside who wrote the scripts and spoke the commentaries. They joined us in ones and twos—suspiciously. They nagged and criticised and felt rather ashamed at first at being attached to this notorious body. The studios, quite unable to make short films themselves and with various evil reasons of their own as well, were non-co-operative; and at first it did nobody's reputation any good to be associated with the Indian Film Unit. But gradually they came along.

They came from all over the place. You will remember some of them. Gian Singh, the Sikh from Delhi. He was the strong and silent man of the Unit, marvellous in a crisis, unmoved by the sudden squalls which occasionally swept across us. Then there was Pratap Parmar; he came from the studio cutting rooms and worked like a fury, determined that the films should be finished. He became the mainstay of the Unit. Ezra Mir, an old hand at the film game, with tales of mighty

deeds in Hollywood in the early days of talkies. There was Mitra from Calcutta via Hitchcock and Carol Reed, the Hamlet of the Unit, and Bodhye from Kholapur who always said that the light was too bad, but who always brought back superb rushes.

In a way they mirrored India. They had their civil wars, they quarrelled, Hindu with Hindu, or Hindu with Mohammedan. But if the Unit was attacked from outside they presented a united front. There was never any communal question in the Unit. And if it wasn't for one or two unscrupulous, power-seeking, politicians there wouldn't be any communal question in India. At least that's how it seemed to me.

To the Unit, as to the Indian filmgoer, a short film was something running about ten reels. Even the trailers ran a quarter of an hour. The Indian film producers had never thought of the film as being used to interpret real life or that ordinary people and their jobs could be a subject for the screen.

They had, it is true, started to make one or two films on the social problems of to-day, but always from a studio point of view, with actors playing on sets which looked as like the real India as English studio country scenes look like rural England. If they went on location they imitated the processions of the Rajahs and took the entire studio with them, and when they came back, excessive make-up and their own idea of how Indian peasants dress plus poor exterior photography made a sorry show. Your film industry is going through a transition stage perhaps. The men of money have got to make way for the men of ideas. But it is going to be a tough fight.

Documentary brought something new to India. It brought not only a new sort of film, but a new way of making films. Everybody in the Unit found these two things difficult at first. If I asked a director to do a sequence of Indian village women at work, he would try and slide off to a studio, hire a few extras, and proudly present me with hundreds of feet of leering, posturing pretty-pretties. Often, when sent away on his own to shoot, he would panic at being cut off from the constant, nagging supervision to which he was used. But it worked.

It worked—with false starts and alarms and excursions but with the wheels eventually turning. Everybody came new to their different jobs. Nobody had written or spoken commentaries before, or worked on a proper script, or mixed three tracks with split-second cues or used other than the most tentative of filters. As you know, not any of the film people had even looked at India before, except through conventional spectacles. Perhaps we started something that will last even after the necessities of war.

And now to finish this long letter, in which there is much that you already know but which may serve as a postscript to an absorbing year. I hope that one day soon we shall meet again, and that when that happens I shall be a real guest in your country and not come as the representative of an unwelcome rule. Although I don't think that your hospitality could be any the more delightful. My best wishes to you and Mrs. Purshottam and all our friends. We have not forgotten the Mahabaleswar trip or the cool evenings at the Bar Club. I hope we shall repeat them together one day.

Yours sincerely,

ALEX SHAW

# SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

(Continued from p. 22)

be included without upsetting the scientific nature of the programme as a whole. Under present conditions, this policy will help to conserve the number of purely scientific films available and the Society can look forward to future seasons more hopefully. In this connection, a series of films on Industrial Scotland will be included in future programmes. The sixth meeting will be held on March 18th, in the Royal Technical College at 7.30 p.m.: the meeting in March being the last ordinary meeting of the Society for the present season.

"Our activities will not cease then, as we have not yet held any of our extra meetings, of which we intend holding three. The first of these will be held at an early date, depending on the completion of the Society's film *Life Saving Bank*. This film, dealing with the blood transfusion service, was scheduled for completion last November, but due to pressure of other film work, our producer, Mr. Frank Marshall, has been unable to devote the time necessary to complete the film. The film work on which he was engaged and which naturally took precedence over our own film, was a film on *Women in Industry*, which he has now com-

pleted. This was made for the Ministry of Labour."

Prestwick Scientific Film Society has now reached the second half of its first season. Certain war-time difficulties have still to be overcome but it is hoped to commence the second season in the autumn. With most of the local halls being used for military purposes the Society are indebted to the Bowling Club for the use of their Clubhouse which, if the heating arrangements are not always ideal, is at least central, acoustically satisfactory and well adapted for projection purposes. A more suitable hall may be obtained on the cessation of hostilities. The membership, at present 50, is increasing at each meeting. The Society has affiliated to the Federation of Ayrshire Scientific Film Societies.

From the subsequent discussions and the appraisal forms the most popular films have been found to be the *Great Green Turtle*, *Cathode Ray Oscillograph*, *Development of the Trout*, *Manufacture of Gas*, *Hydraulics*, *Fasciola*, *Einstein's Theory* and *Air Screw*. The last film is being shown for a second time at the Second Extra Meeting arranged in conjunction with the Ayr Society and the Services. The "feature" of this show is *Skyways over Africa*, a 7-reeler in colour presented by Commander Pigg, one of our members. The wild life scenes are particularly good.

It is perhaps fortunate that three of the members have their own sound projectors and that use of these can be made at the meetings. The national instinct of independence is, however, strong and the Secretary has been instructed to obtain a machine as the property of the Society before the commencement of the second season.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### Spring Number Just Out

CONTRIBUTORS:

JYMPSON HARMAN  
HERMAN WEINBERG  
G. H. ELVIN

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

## 5-MINUTE FILMS FOR DEC. '41, JAN. & FEB. '42.

Title	Theme	Director	Production Unit	Released
*THREE IN A SHELL HOLE	A dramatic episode on the Russian front	(E. Mutanov)	Soviet War News Film Agency	Dec. 1
*SAM PEPYS JOINS THE NAVY	Finance and the Navy	F. Searle	G. B. S. S.	.. 8
ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS	Watching the skies	G. Gunn	Spectator	.. 15
NAVAL OPERATIONS	Naval strategy	G. Tharpe	Shell Film Unit	.. 22
WAR IN THE EAST	The Eastern war zone	—	Shell Film Unit	.. 29
*SEAMAN LASKIER GOES BACK TO SEA	The Merchant Navy	D. de Marney	Concannon	Jan. 5
RUSH HOUR	Shoppers must travel between 10 and 4	A. Asquith	20th Century Fox	.. 12
NEWSPAPER TRAIN	Newspaper distribution in the blitz	L. Lye	Realist	.. 19
THE ARMY LAYS THE RAILS	The work of the R.E.s	—	Army Film Unit	.. 26
KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN	The St. John Ambulance Brigade	Jay Lewis	Strand	Feb. 2
ARMS FROM SCRAP	The story of scrap metal	—	Movietonews	.. 9
*THE HALF OF A NATION	Women in Russia	—	Soviet War News Film Agency	.. 16
LAND GIRL	The Women's Land Army	J. Page	Paul Rotha Productions	.. 23

Notes: \* Recut and dubbed into English. † Produced by the National Savings Committee. ‡ Newsreel and library compilation.

# THE LAND

By RICHARD GRIFFITH

D.N.L. is glad to publish this review of Robert Flaherty's film *The Land*. Reproduced by courtesy of the National Board of Review Magazine of U.S.A.

**The Land:** Production: The Agricultural Administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Direction and Narration: Robert J. Flaherty. Commentary: Written by Russell Lord. Music: Richard Arnell.

PARE LORENTZ called Robert J. Flaherty "a wandering poet", and it is a simpler and more beautiful description than any of the encomiums the critics have thought up. There is the grace of poetry on everything he has done from *Nanook to Elephant Boy*, and of all the screen's masterpieces these films are freshest and most alive when seen today. He has been a wanderer in time as well as in space, for the societies and customs he has filmed were one and all left over from the world's primeval past. But now the fascinating arc of his camera's voyage of discovery has swung full circle and Flaherty brings us a film of his own country—the United States.

More specifically it is about the land on which that country is built, and which has seemed in the past decade to be falling away beneath us. For *The Land* is that new kind of documentary which other men have built on the Flaherty form, which does not merely lyrically celebrate a way of life but marshals facts about it, raises issues, dramatises arguments pro and con. Like *The River*, the new picture is a sort of government report on the state of the union—but how much more dramatic, how much closer to us, than any written report can ever be!

It is beginning to seem, in fact, that documentary is the new democratic art of our time, a propagandist art, perhaps, but backing up its persuasion by argument and statistics and the consciences of its enthusiastic makers.

It will seem a pity to some that Flaherty, in dropping his old form and adopting the new, should have to begin on material which previous films have made familiar. Lorentz's pioneering *Plow that Broke the Plains*, and his masterpiece, *The River*, have told us before what wind and rain and wasteful greed have done to the soil of our country. *The Grapes of Wrath* has dramatised with heartbreaking power the tragic fate of the thousands of farmers dispossessed by erosion and forced into the serfdom of day labour on the great fruit and vegetable farms of California. A hundred films (it seems) have shown man sacrificed to the juggernaut of the machine. So the movies have made words like erosion, sharecropping, and technological unemployment come to life for us before. Now Flaherty does the same job over again, and he has to treat all three subjects at once, so that the film falls abruptly into three parts, with a brief, unemphatic coda which tries, not very successfully, to show what the government is doing to check erosion, stabilise farm prices, and put the farmer himself back on the land he owns.

In short, the picture lacks that wholeness and gradual building toward a climax which have hitherto contributed to the pleasure of seeing a Flaherty film. This is a fractured film, its skeleton

is awry, the bones stick out through the skin. But I think Flaherty meant it that way. Edith Sitwell in her poems, Stravinsky in his music, deliberately adopted a jagged, staccato form to express the confusion and distress of their vision of the modern world. And Flaherty, travelling through his own country for the first time in many years, forsakes the graceful smoothness of his "primitive" films for a form which suggests the horror of his broken journey. "Here we saw this," he says, and passes on, but not indifferently. If ever there was a personal film, this is it. It is a cry, a groan; it has for me the terrible simplicity of the Book of Common Prayer, or of the Book of Job, which Flaherty quotes in the commentary. "If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise reft complain; Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley." The images are equally as beautiful and near and part of common experience. Flaherty's relentless camera, Helen Van Dongen's editing (her part in the film is a great and important one) make a machine cutting corn into *The Machine*, cutting lives. And we see those lives, cast off, broken

down by the roadside, in the eyes which one starving woman turns into the camera. There is a dulled animal curiosity in those eyes, and some pain because she is squinting against the sun, but hardly anything human any more.

A man who brings his camera to such sights emerges not the same. It is hardly strange that the film is little more than a cry of pain, that Flaherty cannot tell us what to do to help, can only shout at us at the end of the film to do something. To many people the tragic beauty of *The Land* will not be sufficient to compensate for the fact that it provides no blueprint. But I have been thinking for a long time that films should pose the problem and leave it in the lap of the audience, for it is we who must answer for our lives, not our teachers, not our artists. And I say now that this film is important and perhaps great because it means that Flaherty in the fullness of his years has come back into the modern world, to work alongside the rest of us. All his films and his film-making have been a timeless escape from the terrible vision he thrusts at us here. But for him who is joined to all the living, there is hope.

## VICTORY IN THE WEST

An article abstracted by a correspondent in the New World from a German brochure on the Nazi film *Victory in the West*.

OUR CORRESPONDENT writes: "The astonishing point is that the German thinking contains so much of the old European preoccupation with aesthetics. That is to say, that in spite of their overt emphasis on activism, the manner of thought underlying the article is still non-activist. For example, note how the writer thinks in terms of counterpoint (an old non-activist conception surely) and the nature of such images as 'Landscape of Sombre Beauty', 'Landscape . . . Ravaged by Guns', 'Darkness, Light . . .', and 'This is Goya'. The images are not functional in progress towards a result but mark time in the atmospheric light of the old order. I confess I am a trifle surprised. For my part I would say—if this article is to be generalised from—that the Nazi mind is not as tough as it pretends to be and there is still room for better barbarians than they. In other words, there is still hope for the more savage English."

"Art?—who cares, we want reality in our war films, hard, naked reality!" That is what the German soldier says. First of all, let us define that vague term, "art". Some of us seem to believe that art is a sort of little white lie, a kind of attractive bluff. And indeed they might well be right about it when they measure art by the mendacious insincerities which use the label. But a true poet is no soft-mouth, a true artist is no rosy-glass painter. He is a realist—more concentrated, less accidental than reality itself. And so is the film man who wants to show a living picture of this war, a picture which shows the true spirit of our age.

"You get no documentary by joining together documentary stills. You get no history by joining together historical events. It is order, the showing up of relations which turns chronology into history. And thus it is the will, the idea behind the film, which turns dead celluloid into a living documentary. To do this the film director must be a poet."

"There is still another point where the war documentary touches upon the basic elements of artistic creativity. Art requires the utmost unreserved devotion—the sort of devotion which was required of the men who made this film—the devotion of the soldier who stakes his life to get things done. Thus life and art become one in the narrow borderland of death. A pictorial chronology of the war was not enough. A documentary must look at the bitter face of reality, without flinching, but only the artistic concentration of the material, the montage of the many hundred thousand metres of exposed film,

could give that supreme reality that was demanded. And he who has seen this finished film will never make the silly statement that art is a lesser truth than reality."

"A poetical report of the war holds more truth than a war diary; a poetically edited film raises its truth from the level of conglomerated accidents to that of an essential truth. It is in this sense that the army documentary has grown into a work of art. It contains as big a slice of reality as a newsreel, and it is bigger than any newsreel because it includes the enemy's point of view so as to give a total view of the whole situation."

"Thus the army documentary combines hard realism with creative editing and sweeping music. There is the infantry theme 'marching, marching' accompanied by close-ups of marching feet, advancing, advancing, crusted with dust, but advancing. And then counterpoint breaks in with another theme, and we dissolve into other feet, marching too, but tired, in torn boots—prisoners' boots. And thus the other themes are built—weariness, dust, battle, landscapes of a sombre beauty, landscapes mown down and ravaged by guns; panzer attacks at night, the darkness lit by burning enemy tanks. This is Goya—the war seen through an artist's eyes—the noble cathedral of Rouen, standing upright over the burning town; or the Maginot line with its criss-cross pattern, ornaments of light and shade, all of it stressed by Windt's score which frees film music from its rôle of subservience. Picture and sound are equal partners, a comradeship of war on the screen."

## SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR FEBRUARY—MARCH

The following bookings for February and March are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by the News and Specialised Theatres Association

	Week ending		Week ending		Week ending
Aeronautics		Doing a Dickens' Walk		March of Time No. 7—7th Year. "Sailors with Wings"	Week ending
News Theatre, Nottingham	Mar. 2nd	News Theatre, Aberdeen	Mar. 1st	News Theatre, Aberdeen	Feb. 22nd
Artie Shaw and Orchestra		Drawing the Line		News Theatre, Nottingham	23rd
The News Theatre, Manchester	1st	News Theatre, Aberdeen	Feb. 22nd	March of Time No. 8—7th Year	
At the Stroke of 12		Dutiful but Dumb		Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Mar. 8th
News Theatre, Birmingham	8th	Father of the Family (Secrets of Life)	Mar. 9th	News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	8th
Bargate Buster		Ferdinand the Bull		March of Time No. 9—7th Year	
News Theatre, Birmingham	Feb. 22nd	Tatler Theatre, Leeds	9th	Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Feb. 23rd
News Theatre, Bristol	22nd	Glorious Vamp (Musical Symphony)	9th	Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	23rd
Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	22nd	Golden Eggs	9th	Eros Theatre, W.1	23rd
Barging Along		Happy Faces		Meet the Stars No. 5	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Mar. 1st	Tatler Theatre, Aberdeen	Mar. 1st	News Theatre, Leeds	Mar. 1st
Beautiful Bali		Goody and Wilbur		Merseside	
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Feb. 19th	Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 23rd	News Theatre, Aberdeen	Feb. 22nd
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	22nd	Tatler Theatre, Leeds	23rd	Tatler Theatre, Chester	Mar. 8th
News Theatre, Bristol	22nd	Going Places No. 84		Mickey's Trailer	
News Theatre, Leeds	22nd	News Theatre, Nottingham	Mar. 9th	Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Feb. 26th
Tatler Theatre, Chester	Mar. 9th	Going Places No. 90	Mar. 9th	Moby Dick's Home Town	
Beautiful Ontario		Happy Faces		Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 15th
News Theatre, Manchester	1st	News Theatre, Aberdeen	1st	Moth and the Flame	
Beach Party		Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	1st	Eros, Piccadilly, W.1	26th
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	2nd	Isles of Fate	8th	More Trifles of Importance	
Broken Toys		News Theatre, Bristol	8th	News Theatre, Leeds	Mar. 15th
Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	15th	Islands of the West Indies	8th	Mount Summer	
Canine Sketches		News Theatre, Nottingham	15th	Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 8th
Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	15th	Journey in Tunisia	2nd	My Ladies' Dress	
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	8th	Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	15th	News Theatre, Aberdeen	Feb. 22nd
Cavalcade of San Francisco		Junior I.Q. Parade	15th	Old Blue (Secrets of Life)	
Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	1st	King Salmon	8th	News Theatre, Nottingham	23rd
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	8th	Land of Inventions	15th	Old New Mexico	
City Bound		Land of Serviles	8th	News Theatre, Birmingham	Mar. 15th
News Theatre, Manchester	15th	Lasso Wonders	1st	Oliver's Birthday Present	
Classic Songs and Dances (Russian)		Tatler Theatre, Leeds	8th	News Theatre, Leeds	1st
News Theatre, Leeds	Feb. 22nd	Tatler Theatre, Manchester	15th	Tatler Theatre, Manchester	1st
Cock of the Walk		News Theatre, Bristol	8th	Oliver's Sweetestake Ticket	
Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 8th	Lions on the Loose	Feb. 26th	Tatler Theatre, Chester	Feb. 23rd
Common Heritage		Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Feb. 26th	On Ice	
News Theatre, Aberdeen	Mar. 15th	Man Who Changed the World	Mar. 15th	Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 1st
Cuban Rhythm		News Theatre, Birmingham	15th	Opening Day	
News Theatre, Birmingham	8th			Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	26th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	15th			Peg of Old Drury	
Disney Cartoon				Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	22nd
News Theatre, Aberdeen	Feb. 22nd			Playing with Neptune	
News Theatre, Aberdeen	Mar. 1st			Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Mar. 1st
News Theatre, Aberdeen	15th			Play the Game	
				Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 8th
				Please Answer	
				News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Feb. 22nd
				Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Mar. 15th
				Popeye Meets King Van Winkle	
				Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Mar. 15th
				News Theatre, Leeds	19th
				Por Pourie	
				News Theatre, Aberdeen	8th
				Queen Cotton	
				Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	Feb. 26th
				News Theatre, Manchester	Mar. 1st
				Respect the Law	
				News Theatre, Birmingham	1st
				Tatler Theatre, Chester	16th
				Russian Salad	
				Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Feb. 22nd
				News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 1st
				Ship Shape	
				News Theatre, Aberdeen	8th
				Sitka and Jeanie	
				News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Feb. 22nd
				News Theatre, Leeds	Mar. 8th
				Tatler Theatre, Manchester	8th
				News Theatre, Bristol	15th
				Spanish Journey	
				News Theatre, Aberdeen	15th
				Spotlight on Indo-China	
				News Theatre, Birmingham	Feb. 23rd
				Steel Goes to Sea	
				News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 1st
				Stranger than Fiction No. 76	
				News Theatre, Aberdeen	Mar. 15th
				Stranger than Fiction No. 84	
				News Theatre, Nottingham	16th
				Stranger than Fiction No. 87	
				News Theatre, Aberdeen	22nd
				Stranger than Fiction No. 90	
				News Theatre, Aberdeen	Mar. 8th
				Sun Fun	
				Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	Feb. 22nd
				News Theatre, Leeds	Mar. 15th
				Tatler Theatre, Manchester	15th
				Take It or Leave It No. 4	
				Tatler Theatre, Chester	16th
				The Bookworm Turns	
				Tatler Theatre, Chester	2nd
				The Brave Little Tailor	
				Tatler Theatre, Leeds	16th
				The Great Meddler	
				News Theatre, Nottingham	Mar. 2nd
				The Green Girdle	
				Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	26th
				This is Bravery	
				News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Feb. 22nd
				News Theatre, Leeds	Mar. 1st
				Tatler Theatre, Manchester	1st
				News Theatre, Bristol	1st
				Tyside	
				News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Mar. 15th
				Wander Trail	
				News Theatre, Nottingham	Feb. 23rd

## "Living Movement" . . .

CARLYLE defined Progress in just those two words! In paying due tribute to the aptness of the sage's definition the Kinematograph Weekly translates the spirit into action. Current events are reported for our readers in relation to the general advance, artistic and technical, by which progress in Kinematography is achieved.

Keep abreast of progress in your craft  
—read the

# Kine<sup>matograph</sup> WEEKLY

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2



# FILM OF THE MONTH

**How Green was My Valley.** Production: Darryl Zanuck. Direction: John Ford.

*How Green was My Valley* is an awkward film to review. Most of the film is so good that it is difficult to understand why the rest should be so bad. The bad patches are the two main stories of the film. First—the valley was green, now it is dirty. The grass and trees are dirty, and the people are dirty. The second, the preacher who, although he loves the miner's daughter, won't have anything to do with her because he doesn't want her to live a life of poverty.

Both these themes are so different to the main film that in the long run it is best to ignore them and take the majority of the film for what it is, a human and simple story of how a mining family and community lived fifty years ago.

The first reel or so of the film's 10,600 ft. is straight commentary description of the valley. Then the people who have been silent come alive and start to unfold. At first they are very slow and it is with a lot of creaking and groaning that some of them manage to become real. When you are beginning to think that this is just another film of Hollywood Britain, you suddenly find yourself in the middle of one of the richest human films that you have ever seen.

The family consists of father and four grown-up sons—all miners who work in the same pit—mother, a daughter who has got an eye on the preacher, the youngest son aged about 10, and a daughter-in-law.

*How Green was My Valley* is certainly out of the ordinary as far as films are concerned—all the most extraordinary things that happen to people have been made by films into the most ordinary things—and to see ordinary things about ordinary people in an expensive Hollywood production is most extraordinary.

Of course, the most surprising thing about the film is that it was made by an American in America. I should think it is about the most difficult job a director can do, to make a film about another country and another people. It is obviously easy to make the old pot-boilers about Henry VIII or stories like that. But to make a film about a mining village in another country is obviously a pretty tough job. Say a film director is about forty and he is making reasonably good films about life in his own country—think of the amount of background that he has instinctively at his finger tips—in fact forty years of living with the people he is making films about. In England we have seen foreign directors come in by the dozen—some of them who had made first class stuff in their own countries—but not one of them has made a film about Britain of the British which means anything at all.

There is no particular continuity through the film. It is just incident after incident in a family and a village.

*How Green was My Valley* is, I should think, the first real film about ordinary people that has come from Hollywood. That is, a film of ordinary people living their ordinary lives. There is no epic trek across a continent—no battle against Fascist cops as in *The Grapes of Wrath*. No romantic boozing in the tropics—no fights over

luscious dames or against bombers as in *The Long Voyage Home*. Nothing that happens in *How Green was My Valley* is out of the ordinary—and most of the film is of nothing very dramatic, or anyway not dramatic in the accepted film sense. A typical sequence is the one where the four big brothers have their younger brother on the table and are massaging his temporarily paralysed legs. It is Sunday morning and all of them are cheerful—they work away good and hard and the boy lying on the table grunts as they work his legs backwards and forwards. Then his grown-up sister walks through the kitchen and says something to him—he resents being treated as a child in front of his brothers, and says, "You mustn't come in here when I haven't got my clothes on." His sister is on her way out, but quickly turns back as she sees a chance for some fun and says, "Oh! I mustn't, mustn't I?" The brothers stand grinning and she suddenly whips the towel off him and gives him a terrific smack on the bottom. There is nothing much to that, but it is very pleasant when you see it.

The wedding is very good, with the miners holding hands in two long chains and swinging their legs alternately in time to the song they are singing. The wedding party with beer flowing and Donald Crisp doing a most amazing trick in a drunken game. The boy starting school, his fights and beatings, and best of all, Dai Bando, the half blind boxer, giving the schoolmaster a lesson in boxing.

There is a lot of rough stuff in the film. The long shots of the much publicised mining village set are atrocious. The mining cottage interiors are about the size of a football pitch. A lot of the acting is not of the best, but it always seems to be difficult for actors to play ordinary people, and there are always the two fake stories in the background. But the good stuff bears down all the faults and you remember with a great deal of pleasure *How Green was My Valley* as a rich and human film of ordinary people.

## CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR: A word about your review of one of our films *Three in a Shell-hole*. Wouldn't bother you except that it exemplifies a particular sort of drivelling thinking from which DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER should be free.

"The film is dubbed. Your reviewer writes: 'The voices are affected, the wording pompous and the lip-synching inaccurate.' That of course may be true. Or it may not. Different people may hold different opinions. Your reviewer is entitled to hold and write, and you to print, his own. But 'Anyway it is certain that this sort of dubbing on a realistic film is a failure.'"

"Anyway". "Quite certain". "A failure". What on earth does this mean? I have made inquiries and I cannot find an instance of a single cinema showing of this film that did not grip its audience and evoke applause. The film was in fact astonishingly successful. More than one candid friend has told me how bad, not merely

the dubbing but the idea of dubbing such a film was, of how its merit and essential character was thereby ruined, etc., and, on being asked how the film went over when they saw it, replied off-handedly, as though it were of trivial importance, "the audience seemed to like it."

Yes, the audience liked it. The audience was moved by it. But the audience was wrong. "Anyway, it is quite certain that it was a failure." Your reviewer may not like that 'sort of dubbing'. Nor do I. But what has that got to do with it? His drivelling remark is an example of the dangerous tendency of bright young film-people to elevate their own standards into absolutes and ignore the crucial test for all art-communication, the art-object audience relation, the final criterion which exposes whether our own standards are as impeccable as we may think, or may not after all need re-examination.

Yours faithfully,  
Knowle, Bucks Hill, IVOR MONTAGUE  
near Kings Langley, Herts.

SIR: I am sorry you felt that the first letter I sent to you was too long for you to print—sorry because it is difficult to compress into one quarter of the length all of the things about DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER which I think need to be said. However, here's an attempt to do so:

D.N.L. won my respect—and that of many others—because it campaigned for the recognition of the function of the film in total war; because it insisted that the place of the skilled film technician was behind a camera, not a machine gun; because it spoke out for the good of the film industry without fear or favour. But D.N.L. loses my respect when it begins to discriminate unfairly between those who are within a small self-appointed coterie of "leaders of documentary" and those who are not. This discrimination is, I contend, obvious in D.N.L.'s treatment of the three principal sponsors of short films in the British Council, the Directorate of Army Cinematography, and the Ministry of Information Films Division.

D.N.L. has condemned the British Council root and branch. Article after article (unsigned) has insisted that the British Council must go, that it is already on the departure platform. Your reasons? Its policy is out of date and remote from the realities of total war. Yet in your issue of March, 1941 (after 19 months of total war), a Shell Cinemagame consisting of three items—the ancient craft of glass-blowing, old and new harvesting methods and the work of a village blacksmith—received from D.N.L. a warm review, ending with these words: "The whole reel has a remoteness from the war-strained atmosphere of life to-day and should find favour with any type of audience."

Would the British Council have received equally warm praise for films dealing with those three subjects? And if it is right for Shell to make films with a welcome remoteness from war-strained atmosphere, why is it wrong for the British Council to do so? I think you will agree that a film like *Realist's Out of the Night*, was well worth making. The British Council commissioned it. Then why not devote your energies to persuading them to commission more such worthwhile subjects?

Then the D.A.K. D.N.L. makes no secret of its dislike for the Army outfit—and hints darkly that there ought to be an investigation. What

(Continued on p. 30)



## CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued)

would such an investigation reveal? That the D.A.K. has commissioned 100 training films, varying in length from one to six reels. That these films have been made to satisfy the immediate training needs of a number of different Army departments—probably rather more than the number of Ministries the M.O.I. finds it difficult to please. That the training given by these pictures is sufficiently valuable that several of our Allies are glad to beg or borrow copies. That the quality is generally as high as—if not higher than—that of similar films made for other sponsors. That in the case of urgent pictures, involving exterior shooting, the D.A.K. is prepared in the event of bad weather—to my mind, quite rightly prepared—to sacrifice photographic quality to the urgency of war. Of course, the D.A.K. isn't perfect. The money available for producers is skimpy, with the result that in many cases the films lack "finish".

Now for M.O.I. D.N.L. beat them up at the outset—and they certainly deserved it. To-day you handle M.O.I. with kid gloves and rush to the rescue when journals with a wider circulation take up the attack. Do M.O.I. deserve this change of heart? Has D.N.L. conducted an investigation of this department yet? If so, there's one point on which I should like information. Units have spent weeks or months working on films for M.O.I. only to find when they were completed that nobody had any clear idea why they were commissioned in the first place.

Can D.N.L. tell us how many M.O.I. films have been stillborn? How much they cost? And who stood in the dock at the inquest? If any films were canned because they fell below the technical standard acceptable to M.O.I.—and presumably the minimum standard would be the worst of the films so far issued—then they heartily deserve their fate. But if they went on the shelf because somebody forgot to find out in the beginning why they were being made and whether they would be wanted when they were finished, then the assumption is that the M.O.I. has not yet completely formulated its own policy. In which case it is surely a little early for D.N.L. to be suggesting that the M.O.I. should take over the activities of any other sponsor.

Yours, etc.,

JAMES CARR

EDITORIAL NOTE: James Carr is in charge of production at Verity Films, a unit which is largely engaged on film work for the Department of Army Kinematography, the British Council, and the Films Division of the M.O.I. We ourselves have little comment to make on Mr. Carr's contentions, although we are interested to note that this is the first time that a defence has been made in writing against the frequent criticisms we have made of the British Council and the D.A.K. Amongst other things Mr. Carr implies that he objects to our editorial articles being unsigned. We can assure him that, in common with the rest of the press, our Board takes full responsibility for opinions expressed in our Editorials and Notes of the Month. The names of the Editorial Board are clearly printed in each issue. We feel that Mr. Carr's revelation of D.N.L.'s tenderness and solicitude towards the Films Division of the M.O.I. will come as something of a surprise both to our readers and also to the Films Division itself.



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2

MERTON PARK STUDIOS, 269 KINGSTON RD, S.W.19

# FILM SHOWS IN FACTORIES

Many films are being shown in factories up and down the country. They form an increasingly important contribution influencing the productive effort. This film activity has its special problems, and these are referred to in the following notes which we publish by courtesy of the Ministry of Information

FACTORY audiences offer an opportunity to provide films for a selected industrial audience. It is true that in spite of long hours and sometimes long travelling, factory workers, particularly girls, still manage to visit the public cinema; this, however, is their relaxation and recreation, and a visit to the public cinema does not necessarily do anything to stimulate their belief in the importance of their work.

There is little evidence that people in factories expect entertainment from Ministry of Information films: factory music, radio, and the fact that they can still go to the pictures and music halls probably means that in many districts their entertainment is fairly well looked after. Industrial workers look to the Ministry of Information films for information regarding the progress and the scope of the war, and knowledge about how the war is being conducted. This they do not always get from the entertainments available to them. Workers expect a reporting quality in films—information and news. They do not expect comedy, entertainment or academics.

Factory audiences are interested in any film which increases their knowledge and understanding of the way the war is going: they are particularly impressed with films which show the Services in action, which show how things are done, or which show how the factory product is employed by the Services. This breaks down into two main interests: firstly, factory workers are interested in how other people are going about their jobs in the war. They like to be convinced that other people are working as hard as they do, and they like to see the efficiency of other industries and of the Services; secondly, they share with other people the natural curiosity to know how things work.

While straight commentary is the most satisfactory type of sound track for use in a factory, attention is often increased when dialogue appears in a film. This, however, should not be over-estimated, for while dramatic films and dialogue films are undoubtedly necessary to break up a non-theatrical programme which lasts for an hour and a quarter, there is not the same necessity to have variety of treatment when only 20 or 25 minutes of film are shown. It is still true to say, however, that to an audience of habitual cinema-goers—and most factory workers are—the dramatic treatment has a very important appeal, and a film such as *Four Corners*, which is a very solid doctrine, goes over very well in a factory.

Factory shows differ from the ordinary run of films in several ways:

(a) The audience is almost invariably larger than is secured in the ordinary way. Works canteens holding a thousand people are relatively common. This means that both sound and picture must have wide coverage.

(b) Canteens are almost invariably large and acoustically imperfect; this means that the picture must be technically perfect, and the sound track very clear.

(c) As many shows are given in canteens during meal times, there is always a certain amount of clatter and conversation; there is sometimes extraneous factory noise; during

the early stages of the show there is often considerable movement among the audience.

The maintaining of a sufficiently high technical standard under the sometimes trying conditions found in factories can be guaranteed by taking precautions along three lines: (a) at the production stage; (b) at the programme selection stage; and (c) during projection.

(a) **Production.**—It is not suggested that all films should be made within the limits of factory needs. This would rule out much fine and experimental work.

There are, however, some things that can be done for many non-theatrical films at the production stage which would enable them to be satisfactorily shown to factory audiences. The sound track should be kept simple: it should not be complicated by dialect, overlapping music or elaborate sound effects which tend to obscure the commentary or dialogue. It is more important to achieve clarity than atmosphere.

Where the argument is complicated, recourse to sub-titles should be adopted. "Chapter headings" and short sub-titles summarising a sequence in advance are very helpful. Where a complicated process is depicted, trick titles superimposed on the picture can be helpful.

The voice of the commentator is, of course, very important. The recognition of B.B.C. voices helps audiences quickly to adjust themselves to listening and their attention is heightened. The B.B.C. voice, has become an accepted standard and is intelligible and welcome in all parts of the country.

Dialect, is a serious trouble, even under ideal conditions. Vernacular is not only difficult but often quite unintelligible. Even if the romantic appeal of rusticity has to be sacrificed, it is more desirable to have clarity and intelligibility than atmosphere.

During the period of the "blitz" there was a space of night pictures—which is understandable but these films are difficult to show except under ideal conditions.

Intricate diagrammatic work and fine lettering does not stand reduction to 16 mm.: bold diagrammatic work is all right. Fine diagrammatic work and fine lettering should be avoided in all non-theatrical films.

(b) **Selection of Programmes.**—The lunch-hour break in factory canteens seldom exceeds 40 minutes. The usual practice is to allow the audience 10 minutes to get to their seats and get started on their meal. The actual film showing usually runs from 20 to 30 minutes. It means that three 1-reelers can be shown or one 1-reeler and a 2-reeler. Often when only 20 minutes are available, it is found best to run two 1-reelers.

The first selection must be made to rule out all films not technically suitable for showing under factory conditions. The 5-minute films which do not have first-class factory appeal should be left out, as these may already have been seen by the audience. The next type of film to avoid in factory shows is the academic discussion. These films, while essential for many kinds of non-theatrical audiences, do not have the urgency and reporting quality which is the key to successful factory shows. This then leaves

the action and dramatic films, the special news-reel issues, the Empire films (for example the Canadian shorts), and the special descriptive non-theatrical films as well as some acquisitions such as *The March of Time*.

Film Officers have found it quite possible to build suitable programmes from this material, but there is a shortage of suitable factory material especially in view of the necessity to visit the same factories regularly. Every effort must be made to achieve a sufficient and growing supply of suitable films.

(c) **Projection.**—Operators will find that technical quality in factory shows can in a measure be safeguarded if they observe the following points:—

i. The loudspeaker should not be placed on a level with the base of the screen. With a large audience, this practice leads to a marked absorption of high frequencies which impairs the sound reproduction. The loudspeaker unit should be raised to a point at least half-way up the screen. This almost invariably secures a better sound coverage and combats the absorption.

ii. Projectionists in many cases tend to set the tone control at "cut treble" which, of course, aggravates the above conditions. Unless a hall has extremely bad acoustics, the tone control should be set at "top".

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(Continued from p. 21)

with colour, the dyeing—a sodden black mass being lifted from the vat which when dry glows with the soft colour of violets and the weaving itself. The climax of the tweed being actually worn is extremely well done. The Pipe Band of a Scots regiment swinging along Princes Street during one of its busy hours, the colour of the tartan kilts and then the swift swing of the camera on to a passer-by wearing the tweed whose life history we have followed. Without comment, she is lost in the crowd and the film goes into its final sequence. The Technicolor is excellent, and full use has been made of the rural background of wool as well as of the colours used in the making of a piece of tweed.

**Propaganda value.** As a salesman for British-made tweed, at a time when vital, currency valuable, exports must be maintained and increased, this film is excellent. (If indeed that is still our policy.) By skillfully mixing images of tweed, its makers, pastoral scenes of clouds and running water, it should make everybody who sees it feel that if they buy British tweed, they are buying much more than a piece of cloth.

Any reader of the fashion magazines will appreciate how important this is, when a scent is sold because it recalls the smile of the DuBarry, a bracelet is connected by subtle inference with the treasures of the Incas, and the line of a gown recalls the Second Empire and its glories. After this film, border weave should fill the shops of South America and the other luxury markets with the heather-laden breezes of Scotland and the faint echo of the pipes.

# FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made.

F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Australian Trade Publicity Film Library**. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3, sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**British Instructional Films**, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; *Pathé Gazette*s and *Pathetones*; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Canadian Pacific Film Library**. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity**. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

**Central Council for Health Education**. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*.

35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

**Central Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Dominion of New Zealand Film Library**. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

**Educational Films Bureau**, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Educational General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak, Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *Battle Fleets of Britain*, *Canada at War*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafalgar Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome and Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Head, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts. 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association**, Ltd. Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MARCH, 1942

## CONTENTS

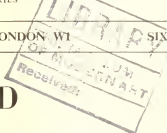
FACTS TO BE FACED	33
NOTES OF THE MONTH	34
VALE ATQUE AVE	35
FILMS AND ARMY EDUCATION	36
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	37
CANADA'S CAMERA ON THE WAR CLOUDS by Theodore Strauss	38
A JOB TO BE DONE by Bosley Crowther	39
FILM AND REALITY by Basil Wright	40
SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR MARCH/APRIL	42
FILM SOCIETY NEWS	43
CORRESPONDENCE	43
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION FILMS by Victor Seligman	45
SUMMONS TO ARTISTS	45
SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES	46
DOCUMENTARY AND EDUCATION by Edith Manvell	47
FILM LIBRARIES	48

VOL 3 NO 3

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON, W1

SIXPENCE

## FACTS TO BE FACED



If morale in Britain is low this is due, not to defeatism, but to frustration. Libya, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, Java, the *Scharnhorst* episode, have all presented the British people with a vision of themselves in relation to the rest of the world which they have never seen before. "Lesser breeds without the law", and all sorts of "peculiar foreigners" are either inflicting ignominious defeats on us or are, for the present at least, our main defence against defeat. These and similar realisations are still in the process of sinking into our consciousness, and our sense of frustration is due not merely to them but also, and in greatest sense, to a feeling of hopeless inadequacy at home. The critics of the Government may well be wrong, but until something is done to prove them wrong, or until an active and convincing policy is outlined by the War Cabinet, the dangerous state of morale that at present exists will remain.

Maybe we shall achieve this summer a great victory. Victories are naturally good for morale. But victories cannot be won without morale. And the danger of the present situation is that our propaganda system is a failure. Years of neglect are bringing their harvest, and unless our propaganda switches to an active policy at home as well as abroad it is in danger of becoming a contributory factor to an unnecessary prolongation of the war.

Our propaganda has not failed merely for mechanical reasons. It has failed because it is bankrupt of ideas and bankrupt of policy.

It will continue to fail just as long as our propagandists continue to shut their eyes to the fact that we are living in the middle of a world revolution, and that therefore revolutionary tactics are not merely expedient but also absolutely vital.

The Press is the only propagandist medium not controlled by Government sources, and it can achieve much (more indeed than it is doing) by forming an independent focus of active criticism.

But media like radio and film—particularly as direct propaganda weapons—suffer from the disability of being, by and large, the mouthpiece of Government. A radical change in the Government's policy towards these two powerful media and what they say is an absolute necessity.

It is too late for authority to plead, cajole, or reassure. There must be no more radio-features or propaganda films whose main message (however interesting or box-office) is likely in any way to lead to a feeling of complacency. There is absolutely nothing to be complacent about.

Nor is it any use producing "calls to action" without their being backed by hard thinking—and how many official propagandists have done any hard thinking so far? *If people aren't working hard enough*

*in the war effort there can, in the long run, be only one reason—that they have no basic incentive to an all-out effort.* That basic incentive can be supplied either adventitiously and from without (e.g. an invasion of this country or an allied victory) or from within by a gigantic propaganda effort which will frankly admit that this is a revolutionary period, which will step down from the pedestal of present authority whenever necessary, which will formulate and implement the real ideas for which people as a whole are fighting (nobody in Britain has bothered to do this yet), and which will use all and every revolutionary tactic to gain its ends.

If propaganda is to play—as it must—a vital part in the winning of this war, our propagandists must adhere closely to the following principles:—

1. Consciousness that they are the vanguard of policy, and that therefore they must not merely keep in touch with, but, whenever necessary, merge themselves with the broad masses of the people.
2. They must be hard thinkers. Their leadership in strategy and tactics must be correct and far seeing, for they cannot be successful unless the mass of the people can, as time goes on, be convinced by experience that what the propagandists say is correct.

Only on such principles as these can we help to build up the iron discipline which is now so badly needed and which is the absolute necessity if we are to win.

Any survey of the present situation as regards propaganda makes it clear that these pre-requisites have been and are continuing to be neglected. How far this state of affairs can be remedied without drastic changes in a wider political field is a matter of some conjecture. But in any case it is the duty of all true propagandists in films or in radio to devote their own energies and thought to the purposes outlined, to campaign vigorously against ideas and subjects which do not fit into the scheme, and to play their part in converting inadequate official ideas into something approaching the active attitude which is needed.

It is not a question of stimulating a comatose people. It is a question of providing a means by which they can feel, in a practical sense, that there is an ultimate purpose, leading forward to a better state of affairs and not back to the *status quo*, in the present holocaust. Only if they are quite certain that they are fighting for a positive result (a new world) rather than a negative result ("beat the Axis and make the world safe for pre-1939 democracy"), can people freely give themselves to "the unprecedented torment and sacrifice, unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted



searching, study, testing in practice, disappointments, suffering, diligence and thoroughness", which is now so dramatic a characteristic of the people of the Soviet Union.

As long as morale at home, and a vital picture (based on fact) of ourselves overseas, are of fundamental importance to the winning of this war, it is necessary to reiterate the need for a fundamental revolution in our propaganda methods. Weakness in propaganda may only be one aspect of a general ill, but it is significant not merely as a barometer but also as a symptom.

As we have already said, the propaganda services are a weapon in the hands of the Government. We appeal to Winston Churchill and to Stafford Cripps to initiate at once a complete and drastic purge of personnel, an overhaul of the machinery, and, above all, a practical policy, however revolutionary it may appear, on which active and aggressive propaganda may be based. As individuals they have the confidence of the country; that confidence will increase if they will only give the propagandists the tools to finish the job. "The attempt", said Lenin, "to brush aside, to fence oneself off from one of the 'unpleasant' problems or difficulties in one sphere of activity is a profound mistake, and one which later will have to be paid for dearly." We are paying now for our neglect of many things, and one of them is propaganda. But it is in no way too late to clear ourselves of the debt, if only we take action right away.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### Waste

FILMS whose sole purpose is to advertise branded goods are still being made. Studio space, cameras and film stock are being wasted on short films devoted entirely to the job of selling sweets or tobacco; believe it or not, sweets and tobacco were the subject of two recent advertising films. It is a scandal that man-power, apparatus, and screen time should be wasted on this sort of useless nonsense. It is even said that the production of a Government film was recently held up for a week because studio floor space was occupied by a unit making an advertising film. In any case this is not time to waste film stock, or to increase, however temporarily, the jam-up in the laboratory bottlenecks. Films advertising branded goods can be of no possible service to the community. To get them shown the sponsors have to pay the cinemas, and there is a danger that a manager being paid to show an advertising film might well be tempted to give it priority over the weekly Five-Minuter if his programme time was tight. In our opinion an absolute ban on the making of direct advertising films is long overdue. The authorities must clamp down on this type of sponsor right away. The production of advertising films is a direct interference with the national film effort. It would be a pity, however, if the action of a few unpatriotic concerns were to bring the more enlightened sponsors into disrepute. A large number of commercial organisations, both big and small, are contributing propaganda and informational films to the national effort. While it would be idiotic to attribute purely idealistic motives to these sponsors (their action is, at the least, "good public relations") the fact remains that they are making films which are adding to the official propaganda drive. Few of them, as far as we can ascertain, engage on production without previously getting an O.K. from the Films Division of the Ministry of Information. The basic distinction is in any case easy to make, and there should be no difficulty in setting up a system by which no commercial sponsor is allowed to engage on production which is not in the national interest. To take an example: a film showing how to economise in the use of a commodity in short supply is naturally in the national interest; but a film devoted to trying to sell a particular brand of that commodity is directly against the national interest, and permission for its production must on no account be granted. The really enlightened sponsors are of course those who have no visible axe to grind at all; and who base their production plans on a survey of national propaganda needs geared to the M.O.I.'s own programme. But the direct selling film must go. In peace-time it was a

constant nuisance both to those who made it and those who had to sit through it. With any luck it will not survive the war.

### Merit Rewarded

IT is excellent news that of the Academy awards made annually in Hollywood the "Oscar" for the longer documentary class has been presented to *Target for Tonight* (a further award in this class went, appropriately, to *Kukan*, a reportage of the Chinese way). People over here will be especially gratified to learn that John Grierson himself presented the awards. In the short documentary class the award went to *Churchill's Island*, produced in Canada by Stuart Legg and incidentally one of the films debared from renter's quota by the Board of Trade. These two examples once more prove the success and influence of the British documentary movement, and must be a special source of gratification to Grierson himself as the founder, inspirer and still the chief exponent of the documentary school of film making.

### Departure

IT is with sincere regret that we say goodbye to Ronald Horton, who leaves D.N.L.'s editorial chair this month in order to take up an important post in propaganda film production. Horton has edited D.N.L. almost since its first inception, and has carried out this difficult and nearly always delicate job with a courage and far-sightedness which has been of incalculable value to the Editorial Board. We wish him luck in his new post, and are glad to learn that his advice and opinions are still from time to time to be available to us.

### Arrival

J. P. R. GOLIGHTLY, one of documentary's most noted figures, has been seconded from the Army to an important job as personal representative in London of Canada's National Film Commissioner. Many have felt sorry that Golightly's knowledge and abilities as regards the film business should have been buried in the Army, valuable though the work he was doing there may have been. In his new job he will of course be working in close collaboration with Canada House, and will, we hope, have many opportunities to work also in collaboration with his many friends and colleagues in documentary.

### Time to Wake Up

THE Board of Trade still fails to move with the times. As a result the Quota Act is interfering with film propaganda. The latest example of this is *Wavell's* 30,000, an excellent compilation of newsreel and other reportage material shot in Libya. This film may be regarded in the same class as other M.O.I. "specials" such as *Merchant Seaman*, *Target for Tonight* and *Ferry Pilot*. In other words it has big box-office value and is usable as a second feature. But because of the material from which it is edited it is debared from rating as exhibitor's quota—a fact which many exhibitors, anxious to run the film as a piece of really good entertainment propaganda, only realized after booking it. As some at least of them must have been counting on it as part of their annual quota, the resulting situation is not merely annoying but also ridiculous. As we write, the M.O.I. are making representations to the B.O.T., we hope with some violence. But the B.O.T.'s reputation in such matters is not good at the moment, since the case of the Canadian films (see D.N.L. for January) is still apparently undecided. That items of the *Canada Carries On* series, which are official Canadian propaganda and are being distributed by an important American renting organization, should be debared from renter's quota in this country on the grounds that they are "alien" is more than ridiculous, it is an insult to one of our most important allies. It is most improbable that any influential section of the British Film Trade would object to a revision of the Quota provisions which would remove these irritating anomalies which impede part of the war effort. The Board of Trade must be soundly kicked in the pants until it sees sense.

## VALE ATQUE AVE

THE British Empire, as originally conceived, is breaking up before our eyes. This is not simply because Japan has captured Malaya and the strategic bases of Hong Kong, Singapore and Rangoon, but because, throughout the Colonial Empire and the Dominions, the old bonds are weakening and snapping. When Canada looks for an ally close in spirit and ultimate ambition, she looks not across the Atlantic, but to the United States. In her moment of panic at the rapidity of the Japanese advance, Australia appeals, not to Britain, but to the United States and to Russia. These are signs of a situation to be feared.

What was the British Empire? Surely for all practical purposes it was nothing more and nothing less than a variety of conceptions built up in the minds of the peoples of the world by a variety of propagandists. Some of these propaganda conceptions had been created to preserve the Empire, others were designed to destroy it. The images of the Empire which existed in peoples' minds ranged at the one extreme from that of the Empire Day organiser leading British school children in a ritual of map worship, to the Nazi propagandists' opposing picture of a vast slave-labour camp. Both of these pictures are false and out-of-date. In recent years more modern and more enlightened interpretations of the functions of the Empire have grown up. During its unfortunately abbreviated life the Empire Marketing Board did what it could to spread the conception of the Empire as a group of peoples bound together, not by force and exploitation, but by the need to move to a common goal of social and scientific advancement. The Dominions have been coming more and more clearly to see themselves as free creative agents within a forward-looking commonwealth of nations. Yet black spots of repression and exploitation remained. Imperial policy in the West Indies and in India gave the lie to many an idealistic conception and added fuel to the fire of anti-Imperialist hatred.

The Empire has meant many things to many men, each one seeing it in the light of his own ideals and purposes. But the conceptions of Imperialism which move people to action in the present time of testing are the ones that matter. How do the peoples of the Empire see themselves and the Commonwealth to which they belong when the Axis military machine is at the gates? In Malaya the breed of Empire-builders—a special creation of British Imperialism—was suddenly revealed to the Malays and to many other watching races as being not only incompetent in military and civil administration but completely unequal to its responsibilities. This is how the Empire looked in Malaya when the test came. How will it look in India? Is it for

images such as this that we dare ask the free peoples of the world to fight and die?

It is crystal-clear that whatever the outcome of the war may be the original conception of the Empire is finished. This does not mean that the Japanese are likely to be left in control of their new conquests. The contrary is certain. The Japanese conception of Imperialism is less enlightened even than that of our most apocryphic die-hards. The Japanese will be thrown out and it is possible that the British will go back to some of the territories from which they have been so ignominiously ejected. Yet it is certain that the peoples whose countries have been ravaged by two rival imperialisms are by now too disillusioned to have us back on the old terms.

If all that is good in an enlightened interpretation of the responsibilities of empire is to survive, then the successors of the propagandists who designed the old imperial images must create new ones which will serve present and post-war human needs. We must worry less about the white man's burden and more about the white man. The events of recent months have demonstrated that in many territories the white man was capable of carrying no burden whatsoever. Let propagandists have nothing more to do with such anachronisms.

The present situation demands that we regard the Empire as a form of organisation which stands in the line of development from nationalism to internationalism. The Empire must be a loose federation of free peoples looking always for new associations outside. It must be prepared to attach itself to any other existing group of peoples on a basis of pure equality. Once fascism is destroyed the world will have no further use for the theory of a dominant race. In any future conception of empire there can be no question of any included people—white or coloured—dominating the rest, economically or militarily. The opportunity already exists for the propagandist to begin building the new federation of nations which must supersede our out-of-date imperialisms. The peoples of the Empire must be encouraged to make direct contact with the great freedom-loving powers outside. Canada must exchange information and ideals with Russia and China; India must make itself known to America and our exiled European allies, and, in return, must communicate to its own people a knowledge of the nature and purposes of these other countries. A recent leader in *The Times* makes clear the first steps to be taken:

"The establishment of full political accord between Britain and Russia will help to make the alliance effective in another sphere im-

portant for the prosecution of the war. The hopes of a co-ordinated programme for political warfare raised by Sir Walter Monckton's visit to Kuibyshev last autumn have not been realised. Little evidence can be seen of co-operation between British and Russian propaganda services, even in so elementary a matter as broadcasting to enemy countries. The exploitation in broadcasting to Germany so dramatic and fruitful a theme as M. Stalin's Order of the Day was clearly a matter of as much concern to British as to Russian propaganda. So far as can be judged, even the machinery of co-operation scarcely exists at present. The forthcoming appointment of a Press attaché to the British Embassy in Russia should provide an opportunity for remedying this defect. But the first condition is undoubtedly a wider political agreement. The lesson that policy is a necessary foundation of effective propaganda is one which this country has been lamentably slow to learn."

Such a propaganda-exchange would be for the immediate purpose of winning the war. But the self-protective instinct which is throwing the free peoples together in defence against Fascist aggression is a healthy and a necessary instinct in peace as well as in war. The aggression of the Fascist powers has achieved amongst their enemies a sense of common interest and purpose which would have been unthinkable three years ago. It is the duty of the propagandist to see that this will to common action is forged into a weapon which not only will win the war but which can build the peace. The first necessity is to establish channels for the exchange of information, not so much between Governments as between the peoples they claim to represent. Here is the first task of the propagandist. Until it has been carried out have we any hope of victory? In a time of desperate crisis Australia willingly entrusts her defence to a United States general. The Governments of Australia and the United States set up machinery to operate a common military policy. These are vitally important measures but they symbolise a link of less revolutionary significance than do the thousands of American soldiers, airmen and technicians who throng the streets of Australian cities, rubbing shoulders with citizens of the Empire whose task they have come to share. The war has already seen British airmen lighting in Russia, American airmen in China, Chinese troops defending Burma. It is the job of the propagandists of the United Nations to see that these emissaries come to mean more to the peoples of the world than the expeditionary forces of previous wars. By a propaganda-exchange amongst the warring nations, the pooling of military responsibilities must be made to symbolise the united aim and the united power of all freedom-loving peoples to build a new order of society vigorous enough to demolish the old national and imperial boundaries.

# FILMS IN ARMY EDUCATION

**A Report on a Year's Experiment in the Manchester Area. By JOHN MADDISON, Hon. Secretary of the Manchester Film Institute Society**

THERE is considerable interest in the part films might play in Army education, and some months ago DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER published an account of the work being done voluntarily for the troops in Scotland by a group of enthusiasts, using non-theatrical films. In Manchester the Film Institute Society has completed a year's experiment along slightly different lines for the local Regional Committee for Adult Education in H.M. Forces. Here, in the somewhat formal terms of a short report prepared for our own official records, are those details of the scheme which may be of interest to other workers in the same field.

## How the Scheme began and has Developed

The experiment began in a small informal way in February, 1941, when the Secretary was invited to give a series of illustrated lectures on film appreciation to a rather isolated searchlight unit in Cheshire. Conditions were primitive; silent films were projected on a Bell-Howell Filmo machine and the only electrical supply available from the batteries of a service wagon. Perseverance was rewarded by the evident pleasure of the men when the first pictures flickered across the length of their Nissen hut. The course lasted some weeks, covered much of early film history, and concluded with a light-hearted session on the work of Chaplin.

Silent films only limited the value of the experiment, and we were fortunate in securing early the use of two sound projectors and the co-operation of two *cinéastes*, a business-man and a schoolmaster, as lecturers and projectionists. These two and the Secretary have carried on the work ever since, and throughout the year, up to six units, searchlight and anti-aircraft, have been visited each week. At one or two of the sites, continuity has been maintained for periods of over six months.

The vagaries of film supply have to some extent dictated the composition of the displays; the question of film copies (one remembers this as a crippling deterrent to the wide use of film in connection with school broadcasts) was bound to operate here. Programmes have, however, been organised along two main lines: (1) Film history and appreciation, (2) Home and World affairs and general knowledge. The proceedings at each site last about ninety minutes. The films are introduced by a short talk on subject matter or technique lasting from live to thirty minutes, and then there is opportunity for discussion and questions. Once the serious part is concluded, the occasion is rounded off with a few minutes of comedy or music. The talks are made popular and non-technical and wherever possible linked with the men's own experience. One or two examples may be quoted. A discussion of trick photography coincided fortunately with the general release of *Thief of Baghdad*; Harry

Watt's *Target for Tonight* offered comparisons with his earlier effort *North Sea*, then showing at many cinemas; *Tawny Owl* introduced as a lighter element, served for a discussion both of nature films and of the use of commentary; British and Soviet methods of film propaganda as seen in the films of the M.O.I. and Soviet War News Film Agency have been compared with lively consequences; Alexander Shaw's fine documentary *Five Faces of Malaya* was shown with dire appropriateness during the first week of December.

Occasionally a special speaker has been present; General de Gaulle's civil representative in the region answered questions arising from Paramount's *Free France* and a member of the University's Spanish Department talked about his own country when *Spanish Earth* was shown. (How stern and moving this film remains! It makes most of the propaganda efforts of this war appear adolescent. Its uncompromising tragedy seems better somehow for that intangible spiritual quality we called morale.)

## The Reactions of Officers and Men

Attendance at the displays is, one gathers, entirely voluntary, and many informal sidelights reveal that the men appreciate and enjoy this new kind of leisure education. The best testimony to this is their continued presence; N.A.A.F.I. and Nissen huts are always crowded for these visits. Discussion is often lively, but questions asked sometimes underline the general public's ignorance of the serious aspects of cinema and of film appreciation which neither school nor radio is doing much to correct. There is evidence that the men approach the films we give them differently from the ones in the com-

mercial cinemas. Many of them have expressed a distinct preference for the information over the fiction film. Generally speaking, commissioned officers have been very helpful, and have taken an active interest in the displays; the discussions often have a democratic flavour, which is the best guarantee of good relations between the ranks.

Between 150 and 200 films have been shown during the year, but the following select list of about thirty is typical:

Film history and "Classics": *Early Actualities*, *Early Trick Films*, *Great Train Robbery*, *Voyage Across Impossible*, *Chaplin's First Films*, *Shoulder Arms*, *Dr. Caligari*, *Covered Wagon*, *General Line*, *Potenkin*, *Drawings that Walk and Talk*.

Famous documentaries: *Drifters*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Night Mail*, *The River*, *The City*, *Spanish Earth*, *Merchant Seamen*, *The Londoners*.

Actualities, Interest and Information films: *London Can Take It*, *Men of Africa*, *Peoples of Canada*, *Lion of Judah*, *White Eagle*, *March of Time* (various items), *Day at Soviet Front*, *Soviet Harvest*, *Stalin's Speech*, *Beaverbrook's Speech*, *King Penguins*, *Transfer of Power*.

Main sources of supply have been the Central Film Library, the National Film Library and the G.B.I. Library.

The whole scheme has been very successful, and we should like to see it extended, but both machines and voluntary personnel are hard to come by. The "lecturer-compère" for this kind of show must be pretty adaptable and have a genuine interest in cinema. It is, however, a type of service which should appeal to the more active in the Film Society Movement; it carries a good deal of pleasure and stimulation for the hard work involved.

# SEVEN-LEAGUE

an independent documentary unit  
has just completed

## "THE COUNTRYWOMEN"

Directed by: John Page Associate Producer: Paul Rotha  
and

H. M. Nieter (late of World Window)  
has finished directing

## "BLOOD TRANSFUSION"

A four reel film for scientific audiences,  
produced by Paul Rotha Productions

In Production: A film on School Meals

SEVEN-LEAGUE PRODUCTIONS LTD.

H. M. NIETER E. S. FELLOWES-FARROW, M.A., M.Sc.  
R. W. G. MacKAY, M.A., LL.B. E. P. STRELITZ

37, REGENT STREET, W.1

'Phone: Reg. 3737

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Wood for War.** *Production:* Canadian Army Film Unit. *Direction:* J. E. R. McDougall. *Camera:* George Noble. 10 minutes.

*Subject:* One part of the work done by volunteer Canadians in the war effort. Lumberjacks, using their great experience and skill, are felling timber in Britain for vital use in the war.

*Treatment:* By careful avoidance of overselling the subject the film has achieved an excellent balance. We are shown Canadian troops arriving in Britain and we see a special section of them being drafted to Scotland for timber work. Swiftly and efficiently the work is shown, making the quiet hillsides of Scotland look like a roaring lumber camp in an American toughie. Except that they, unfortunately, don't seem to do the leaps from log to log in the rapids any longer. It is always pleasant to see a good job superbly well done on the screen and we certainly see it here. It is a pity, though, that the men on the job are not brought to life a little more—they look interesting characters and the film might have shown something of them as human beings as well as tough technicians. There is a pub sequence, very nicely handled, at the end, but this does not quite satisfy the need for a more lively knowledge of these men who have come across an ocean to give us wood for war. Perhaps freer use of sound would have helped. But it's a nice job and we welcome this first film from the Canadian Army Film Unit.

*Propaganda:* Excellent. People from overseas, working in this country, in close contact with its people and working in a common cause, is one of the best possible propaganda lines.

**Western Isles.** *Production:* Merton Park Studios for the British Council. *Direction:* Terence Bishop. *Camera:* Jack Cardiff. *Sound:* C. Tasto. *Editor:* C. Beaumont. *Music:* William Alwyn. *Commentary:* Joseph MacLeod. 14 minutes.

*Subject:* This is a film of the making of Harris tweed which attempts also to depict the sterling qualities of the Hebrideans in the industry and to remind us of their contribution to the war effort. Since the importance of the manufacture of Harris tweed in a total war economy is not clear, the islanders' war effort is symbolised by the heroic return to his Hebridean home of a young merchant seaman whose ship has been torpedoed in the Atlantic.

*Treatment:* The film is in excellent Technicolor and shows in some detail the processes of tweed making from the gathering of the wool to the washing of the finished material. The film centres round the work of a single family to which the returning seaman belongs. Scenes of the family making its tweed are cross-cut with shots of the young sailor's journey home in an open boat. He is eventually thrown up, more dead than alive, on the coast near his parents' croft, having contrived—apparently by instinct—to steer himself and his companions to the waters he knows best. This part of the story is less convincing than the shots of the special skills and local rituals associated with the making of tweed. There are good traditional songs well sung, and the acting of the principal characters is adequate on a somewhat naive and wooden level, which does, however, manage to convey something of the downiness and stoicism of the Hebridean.

*Propaganda Value.* Little propaganda good can

surely come from suggesting to film audiences overseas that the tweed industry is one of our principal national concerns of the moment. Terence Bishop has, however, succeeded in counteracting in some measure the usual mistakes of British Council propaganda by introducing the shipwreck theme which at any rate admits the existence of a state of war.

**Wavell's 30,000.** *Production:* Ian Dalrymple. *Direction:* John Monck. *Camera:* A.F.U. *Commentary:* Colin Wills. *Music:* John Greenwood. 50 minutes.

*Subject.* This film tells the story of Wavell's advance into Libya.

*Treatment.* The visuals consist for the most part of newsreel material and Army Film Unit footage with which we are already familiar. The film is given continuity and shape by the use of maps and the introduction of participants in the battle who describe the strategies in terms of their own roles. The resultant picture of the battle is not over clear and we are left with the impression of a number of separate engagements which do not integrate into any single tactical conception. This serious criticism would have been met by an overriding policy statement by Wavell himself or some other qualified spokesman.

*Propaganda Value.* Wavell's 30,000 does succeed in bringing the battle alive in terms of personal experience. It will help give the civilian a clearer conception of what actually is meant by mechanised warfare and it provides an excellent example of the extent to which newsreel material gains in significance if it is edited instead of just being joined together.

**Newspaper Train.** *Production:* Realist Film Unit. *Direction:* Len Lye. *Camera:* A. E. Jenkins. *Commentary:* Merrill Mueller. *Recording:* Ernst Meyer. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

*Subject.* Newspaper Train shows how, during the period of the blitz, newspapers were regularly delivered to every part of the country.

*Treatment.* The story is told by an American newspaper man and shows how, in spite of a series of bombs which one night cut off one London terminus after another, the Ramsgate newspaper train did eventually get away on its journey. The film is full of technical ingenuity. The raid itself is represented by explosions and severed lines on a railway map, accompanied by raid noises, and telephoned instructions diverting newspaper vans and loaders from one station to another as line after line is cut. In spite of the absence of actual raid scenes the effect is amazingly realistic. The exhaustion of the trainguards after they eventually leave London is neatly conveyed and their reaction to machine-gun attack by a German fighter is the real thing. Here, again, we do not see the raiding plane, but only its ominous shadow paralleling the track and then moving across the train as its machine-guns sound. The pay-off to the story takes place in the office of the editor of the *Daily Express*. A Ramsgate newsagent has sent in bullets found embedded in his batch of copies. Unfortunately, Mr. Christiansen and Mr. Mueller, the reporter-narrator, appear to have been too much influenced by Hollywood newspaper films to give a convincing performance.

*Propaganda Value.* There appears to have been no good reason for making this film at the present time. Even though, by an oversight, due credit was not given during the blitz to the heroisms which lay behind regular newspaper deliveries it is surely too late to do much about it now. It is high time that blitz-based propaganda were forgotten, and surely the M.O.I. has more immediately urgent uses to which to put its weekly five minutes?

**Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat.** M.O.I. for the Ministry of Agriculture. *Production:* Strand Film Co. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. *Direction:* Ralph Bond. *Camera:* Charles Marlborough. *Commentary:* Wilfred Pickles. Non-T. 10 minutes.

*Subject.* This film is intended to persuade people that it is worth while keeping tame rabbits in order to increase the meat ration. It stresses the importance of choosing a healthy doe and gives concise information on breeding, the care of the young, types of hutches and how to make them, and the feeding of rabbits on kitchen waste and the official bran ration. The film comes to an abrupt end as a housewife brings a rabbit stew to the dinner table.

*Treatment.* As an information film for the beginner in rabbit-keeping, it is practical and direct. Camera work and commentary are clear and unhurried. A little more information about feeding, and advice on how to deal with the disconcerting ailments which afflict rabbits and discourage the amateur would be welcome. The way to kill a rabbit is left out altogether—a serious omission. It is, however, better to give a little essential information efficiently than to overload a film of this kind with too many details, since its main purpose is to persuade people that to keep rabbits is quite a simple business.

*Propaganda value.* The value of this film is one of direct instruction rather than to make people conscious that there is a real urgency in increasing our food production. It answers most of the queries which those who intend to take up rabbit-keeping might ask. The importance of Rabbit Clubs might have been stressed as they would follow up in greater detail the information which this film provides.

**Ferry Pilot.** *Production:* Ian Dalrymple. *Direction:* Pat Jackson. *Camera:* H. E. Fowle. *Editor:* R. O. McNaughton. *Music:* Brian Easdale. 35 minutes.

*Subject.* The story of the work of the A.T.A. which provides personnel to fly newly completed aircraft from factory to Service airfield and in general moves aircraft across the country (or across the Atlantic) at such times as they are not in the hands of R.A.F. pilots.

*Treatment.* The film first shows how ferry pilots' work is organised and establishes in dialogue sequences the variety and importance of their job. Then we see planes being ferried by men and women pilots and we are given some idea of the special problems which arise from the need to have pilots available in the right place at the right time—often at remote airfields at short notice. The film finishes with an unarmed bomber unwittingly escaping enemy attack by the skin of its teeth and this sequence, plus an earlier aereo-

(Continued on page 46)



# CANADA'S CAMERA ON THE WAR CLOUDS

By THEODORE STRAUSS

Reprinted by courtesy of the *New York Times*

AT A TIME when the United States is massively assembling its energies for total war, and all the parts of that mountainous effort must of necessity be closely interrelated, it might be well to look northward briefly to Canada, where one weapon, as yet still wavering in the hands of nearly a dozen agencies in Washington, has been brought into full use on the home front. That weapon is the film. With the exception of Russia and Germany no nation has been so sensitive to the incalculable importance of films in readying the public first for the crucial demands of all-out war and secondly for the changed world of the peace to come.

Perhaps much of the feeble confusion which now marks our use of fact film in creating an intensified public awareness to the issues in this conflict and in showing the average citizen what its successful prosecution will require of him is related to a lack of centralised authority in other quarters. But the fact is that the exploitation of films in Washington is still characterised by the overlapping efforts of numerous agencies with at best an only sporadically intelligible policy. We have many random efforts, scattered results; many agencies, faulty co-operation, many piecemeal plans, no policy.

## How Canada Does It

Meanwhile, the framework for government-sponsored films in Canada stands in direct contradiction to the footloose agencies in Washington. The Canadian film effort has reached its present momentum because of three salient facts. First, it has centralised all government film interests and production under a single board and placed the execution of the government's programme under the direct supervision of professional film-makers instead of departmental amateurs. Second, it has made integrated use of the existent facilities of private film industry and in those films intended for theatrical distribution it has successfully met professional standards of entertainment and dramatic interest. Third, it has a flexible but clearly articulated government policy which relates the work of all units and departments in a cohesive programme. Admittedly, Canada's film problems differ from our own and are considerably less complex, but the important thing is that they have been brought into a single pattern.

This year the National Film Board of Canada will produce and release an approximate total of 150,000 feet of film in 150 items, of which forty or fifty will be of two reels or more. The cost will run at \$1,000 to an occasional \$7,000 per reel. This output is not a vague blueprint; it is based upon present production rates. It is divided between theatrical and non-theatrical films. Of these, the former category includes the "Canada Carries On" series, films roughly comparable to the March of Time in technique, which alternate between those short subjects, internationally distributed, describing Canada's relation to the world war, and those for national distribution which describe Canada's war effort in more purely national terms. The theatrical release also include weekly news-clips and novelty trailers on government campaigns; one-reel musicals incorporating patriotic choruses, and a news review in French.

## Non-theatrical Audience

The non-theatrical films are devised to bring specific information and exhortation to specific audiences such as the Air Raid Precautions or the Women's Auxiliaries; audiences which are being intensively organised. This category comprises departmental films reporting on specific aspects of the war effort, films promoting tourism in Canada, films for the armed services, films prepared from overseas material showing what other countries are doing on matters of interest to Canada, and purely instructional films.

All this production is under the direct control of the National Film Board, which was established several years ago according to a bill drawn up by John Grierson, the dynamic little Scot who is now its executive officer. Under his plan all the government departments are required by statute to bring statements of their film needs to the board, which guarantees against duplication of effort and fits the departmental films into an overall scheme of production. Furthermore, all government relations with the film industry are channelled through the board, which is acquainted with the industry's point of view.

## Men at the Helm

The film board as now constituted includes two government Ministers, three senior civil servants and three members of the public selected for their interest in and knowledge of the film as an instrument of public policy. Mr. Grierson, the film

commissioner, in whose hands the day-to-day initiative remains, makes a monthly accounting to the board of work in progress. Inasmuch as most of the films are paid for out of the budgets of departments requesting them, the budget of Mr. Grierson's department is hardly more than is necessary to maintain an office staff and a minimal number of technicians and laboratory workers. Whenever the spate of production exceeds the capacities of his own department, the film commissioner farms out the tasks to private producers under the direction of one of his own supervisors, or makes use of private laboratory facilities.

The production staff—producers, directors and cameramen—now operating in seven units is maintained on a strictly temporary basis simply to act as a prod on personal initiative in the quarter where it counts most. As Mr. Grierson explains: "I have a staff of conscience-stricken men". He places a premium on young men. Several, such as Stuart Legg, who is now brilliantly editing the "Canada Carries On" series, are comparatively experienced men who have worked with Mr. Grierson during his years as a documentary producer for the British Government. The others are bright young men with "a head of steam" who are rapidly trained.

## No Handicaps Asked

Up to the present this staff has done better than  
(Continued on page 39)

## "Living Movement" . . .

CARLYLE defined Progress in just those two words! In paying due tribute to the aptness of the sage's definition the Kinematograph Weekly translates the spirit into action. Current events are reported for our readers in relation to the general advance, artistic and technical, by which progress in Kinematography is achieved.

Keep abreast of progress in your craft  
—read the

# Kine<sup>matograph</sup> WEEKLY

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2

well in competing with other commercial short subjects for theatrical distribution. From the very beginning Mr. Grierson made it plain that those films intended for theatrical showings would be sold and not given away to lie unused on a projection room floor. It was his intention to sell the films on their own merits and to use the commercial success of the films as a yardstick to measure their popularity and impact upon the public. Judged by those standards, the National Film Board is doing the job it set out to do. Of the 1,000-odd theatres in Canada approximately 900 exhibitors to-day are showing the "Canada Carries On" series and paying better prices for them than for any other short subjects.

As its ultimate goals, the Canadian film effort is trying to crystallise an awakening sense of a unified national identity in a young country which has still only partly assimilated its numerous racial streams. More immediately, the film board (and here Mr. Grierson quotes Walter Lippmann's phrase) is interested in giving the public "a pattern of thought and feeling regarding the war". It is concerned with stating in simple, dramatic terms such essential themes as the relation of Canada's mineral resources to the strategy of the war as a whole. It is trying to explain graphically the strategy of food and oil,

the remote origins of pressures that raise the cost of bread or gasoline for the man in the street, the reasons why his country's frontier may well lie in Libya or Norway and why his sons and brothers are fighting on extra-territorial battlefields. In such films as *Atlantic Patrol* or *Letter from Aldershot*, it is trying to bridge the gap between the public and the front line.

#### Destinations

Mr. Legg once quoted Ludendorff as saying that propaganda is the pace-maker of policy. But if, in a very deep sense, the films of the Canadian National Film Board are propaganda, they are much different from the negative and sensational broadsides of the last war. These films are an attempt to give the people a great hope and a great faith in themselves and in a brave new world. Instead of using the films to outsmart the public, to rush it unthinking into situations it does not foresee, the film board is dramatising, simplifying and bringing into perspective the enormous and complex issues of this war. It is making the people full partners in the grim but hopeful odyssey of this generation. And it is achieving this end only because its purposes are clearly conceived and their execution systematic.

## A JOB TO BE DONE

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

Bosley Crowther, in a recent article in the *New York Times* writes: "Confusion and lack of policy mark the outset of our wartime film programme." Reprinted by courtesy of the *New York Times*. Slightly abridged.

BACK in those halcyon peace-times, when war was but a dimly looming cloud, much speculation was devoted by people of a social turn of mind to the speed with which our mass communicators—namely, the films and radio—would be geared to psychological expedients when the fated M-day arrived. No one seemed to doubt for a moment that, the second the lid blew off, the air would be charged with inspiration and the screen would bulge with pat intelligence. One of the many surprises of the past disturbing six weeks has been the notable absence of any such evolutions. And, in so far as the medium of the screen is broadly concerned this deeply interested corner must express some disappointment too.

Let us all be thankful that fools have not rushed blindly in and dashed off hysterical pictures which wise men have apparently eschewed. Also let us be thankful that the screen has not been swamped with rank preachments. But don't let's be too confident that something of the sort might not occur without a more intelligent, co-ordinated plan to cover films. And let us remark regretfully—but not impatiently yet—that no such plan, officially drawn up, has been apparent at the time this goes to press.

The problem of putting motion pictures to most effective use in a nation at war as ours is and with the commercial organisation we have here requires a masterful solution comprehending many elements. First, of course, it is necessary to have a general idea of the over-all accomplishment desired or expected from films—how much the medium should continue simply to en-

tertain; how much, and in what particular manner, it should be used for the building of morale, and how far it should be permitted to reveal to the public spot news. Second, it is essential to know who or what particular groups are best qualified to turn out the films which are so desired. And third—but not least important—there is the problem of distribution, the delicate task of funneling so much film out to the public.

At present, Lowell Mellett, head of the Office of Government Reports, is the man whose job (among others) it is to give the films an ordered plan, to co-ordinate the activities of several government film-producing agencies with the complicated structure of the commercial industry and to shape, apparently, a policy which would govern our war-time screen. Needless to say, Mr. Mellett, who has had no previous experience with films, is compelled to rely very largely upon the advice and services of others, plus the co-operation, generously bestowed, of the industry's own War Activities Committee.

#### Confusing the Issue

Although it is not difficult to expect a perfect programme to be placed in operation within such a brief space of time, it is also natural to deplore the confusion which now quite obviously exists.

Nor does the present set-up make matters less difficult. There has, as yet, been no move made to regulate Hollywood, and President Roosevelt, in his letter appointing Mr. Mellett as co-ordinator of films, said that "the motion picture must re-

main free in so far as national security will permit". Therefore, there is no immediate task of guiding entertainment films. But the vital function of producing so-called morale films—the shorts and manifold briefs intended to inform the public on war activities—is divided among several agencies, each with its own job to do. And the consequence is that a haphazard flow of films may very soon clog the works. In addition to making their own intramural training films, the Army and the Navy are ready to pass films along to the public. The Treasury Department has been feeding defence-bond briefs for some time. The Agriculture Department may have its films to release. And, of course, the Office of Emergency Management has been most active in turning out shorts giving a factual survey of several defence subjects.

The time has come for a quick, and efficient adjustment of this set-up. And from every commonsense angle it would seem that Mr. Mellett would be wise to acquire for himself one or more advisers with vast experience in the picture field and a superior capacity to vision the job which must be done with films right now. Then it would seem most intelligent to gauge the public's probable response to films with a war-effort content; films designed to build up the morale, and set a definite schedule by which these films should be fed to exhibitors. This schedule, of course, should be co-ordinated with the run of commercial films so that a proper proportion of one to the other might exist at all times.

And, finally, it would seem most advisable to take advantage as much as possible of the established, experienced industry which exists for producing films in this country. No finer or more capable movie-makers can be found any place in the world than the ones we have right here. No more efficient producing organisations could be built than those we have functioning. The March of Time, for instance, has been making for years the sort of films which are quite effective in conveying information and inspiration to the public. Numerous A1 shorts producers are available in Hollywood to turn out morale pictures along whatever lines laid down. Let Mr. Mellett tell them what he wants; they'll turn it in.

#### Eyes and Ears

And, by the same token, it would seem logical to make extensive use of the present newsreel organisations for the distribution of news. Obviously, the various armed services will maintain strict supervision of their fields, and their own augmented film units—especially the Navy's excellent group, trained by John Ford (now Commander) and in the March of Time's new service training school—may be counted upon to cover combat actions in far-flung areas. But the newsreels are old, experienced organs: they know what it's all about. As much opportunity for initiative and co-operative enterprise as is practical should be given them.

There is no ready-made formula to cover this complex problem of enlisting the screen in the war. The experience of the English film-makers is not entirely applicable, nor is the smoothly working set-up of the Canadian Ministry of Information's film unit, explained on this page last week, a blueprint to be followed literally. But our problem can be solved, and solved handsomely, if a good deal of common sense is applied and too many selfish rivalries are not permitted to intrude. This is no time for professional fencing. We need good films.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 3

MARCH 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Center, New York.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

## EDITOR

Ronald Horton

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

Owned and published by

FILM CENTRE LTD.

34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1

GERRARD 4253

## FILM AND REALITY

By BASIL WRIGHT

WITH A boldness only equalled by that of Dr. Johnson when he set out to compile his English Dictionary, Cavalcanti has, in *Film and Reality*, attempted, all on his own, to describe the development of the realist film over the past fifty years in an opus which runs for an hour and three quarters and contains extracts from fifty-eight different films.

The result is a remarkable document, impressive for the wealth of its contents and (to myself at least) in many places controversial as regards its choice of material, and its attitude towards the social, as opposed to the academic or aesthetic development of the realist film. But whatever else it may be, it is certainly stimulating; after seeing it most people will find themselves considering the wider perspectives and the future possibilities which arise from this particular branch of film making.

*Film and Reality*, being as it were the only visual reference-work dealing with a special type of cinematic endeavour, deserves close and detailed attention from the critical standpoint. And if my own criticism should appear too personal, no doubt others, including I hope Cavalcanti, will hasten to correct, refute, or amplify.

## I. THE SCOPE OF THE FILM

As might be expected, *Film and Reality* is at its safest when it deals with history, or with chapters in realist development which can be regarded as more or less complete.

The First Section (which is preceded by a prologue detailing Dr. Marey's early experiments and the first film made by the Lumières), explains how a new form of dramatic entertainment quickly arose from the new invention. Extracts from *The Life of Charles Pease*, *The Great Train Robbery*, and *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*, reveal how the essentials of the movie medium were quickly lost as producers turned more and more to the straight photography of theatrical mime. Incidentally D. W. Griffiths was probably the man who did most to rescue cinema from this blind alley, and this section might well have ended with a brief extract from *Birth of a Nation*.

The Second Section shows how newsreels and interest films have always formed a continuous thread of contact with reality, whatever deviations the rest of the cinematic world might be indulging in. Here Cavalcanti very properly points out that both the newsreel and the interest film, being forms of visual record and little else, are unlikely to vary much in attitude and content, being affected only by improvements in photographic apparatus and similar mechanical developments. There is certainly little difference between the rioting suffragettes of 1906 and the panicky crowds milling around the killer of King Alexander in 1934.

Two excerpts in this section have a special visual impact. The first is a short sequence of Chinese families burying their dead after the execution of revolutionaries in 1909; this might have been made yesterday. The second is an extract from Ponting's famous film of Scott's last expedition; which is, with *Nanook*, a remarkable reminder of the superb photographic quality which was obtainable with the old orthochromatic film. Incidentally, the camera

which Ponting used on this expedition has been in possession of the British documentary movement since 1932 and as far as I know is still in use.

The Third Section is perhaps the most complete and most memorable of the whole opus. But I wonder if Cavalcanti is right in describing *Documentaries of Far-Off Lands* by the epithet "romantic"? It hardly fits Poirier's *Eve Africaine*, and Allegret and Gidé's *Voyage au Congo*, both of which confirmed for me once again my feeling that the French directors who took their cameras overseas were often more *voyeurs* than *voyageurs*. Nor, certainly, is the word "romantic" applicable to Wavrin's *Pays du Scalp*. This, like Bunuel's *Land without Bread* (not represented in the film) is a straight ethnological study; and the sight of natives eating live slugs, however well filmed and however interesting, is hardly romantic.

Flaherty of course, is the big man of this section, which is indeed completely overshadowed by the wonderful tatting sequence from *Moana*; but here again I would even prefer to use the adjective "exotic" in its original dictionary sense, to "romantic".

The terrific realism of the crossing of the river in *Grass* is the other dominating factor in this section. *Grass*, without doubt, is one of the great realist classics, and worthy of constant revival along with *Nanook* and *Moana*. And, talking of early American films of fact, what has become of *Chang*, with its terrific picture of man's eternal struggle with the jungle?

But it is Section Four, dealing as it does with the sociological development of the film of fact which has obviously given Cavalcanti the most trouble and which is bound to be the most controversial. For this is the point where the historical merges with the contemporaneous, and where, incidentally, Cavalcanti's pre-occupation with aesthetics is at its most dangerous. Personally I do not believe that any one man is in a position to select extracts from the huge bulk of production during the past ten years. With practically all the producers and directors of the films still at work, a personal selection is bound to be too arbitrary. Far better to have a selection committee, however heated the discussions which might result.

As it is, I think that Cavalcanti has missed two things—firstly the real meaning of the sociological approach which was preceded and signalled by his own *Rien Que Les Heures* and by Ruttman's *Berlin* and which under Grierson's inspiration and leadership has formed the permanent basis of all documentary production in this country for the past twelve years. Secondly—and this is very surprising from Cavalcanti—he has, in dealing with the Grierson documentary, almost ignored the dynamic use of sound a factor to which he himself has made such a great contribution. The various early experiments in sound were important not merely from the aesthetic point of view but because they were designed to strengthen and clarify the sociological angle. Yet, barring an extract from *Housing Problems* and another from *Night Mail*, the uninitiated might well get the impression that the realist film had hardly left the stage of musical accompaniment.

One of the most important developments in

documentary has been the introduction of dialogue sequences, using sometimes raw material, sometimes actors, sometimes a mixture of both. Yet, in the extract from *North Sea*, Cavalcanti gives us a sequence which might just as easily have been shot in the *Drifters* period as in 1938, whereas the great wealth of dialogue material in the film (e.g. the conference in the cabin) obviously had an absolute claim for representation.

Similarly the historical importance of Rotha's *Contact* is hardly great enough to justify its inclusion if it is to mean the omission of the same director's *Shipyard*, in which the sociological approach and also the use of sound is far more representative of both the aims and the development of the realist movement in Britain.

Other selections in this sequence are more a matter of personal choice. I myself think that Cavalcanti has done less than justice to *Rien Que Les Heures*, *Thurs-Sib*, *Drifters* and *The Spanish Earth*. But others may think otherwise.

There is one other omission, and that is the analytic film dealing with mechanical or scientific processes or with their theory and practice—a genre in which Britain has, in its documentary movement, done pioneer work. No reference at all is made to such films as *Aero-Engine*, *Transfer of Power* or *Aircrow*.

As regards the Final Section, which is entitled "Realism in the Story Film", I confess myself entirely baffled. I agree in some respects with Cavalcanti's contention that: "To-day the theatrical film still holds a prominent place in the cinema, but has undergone no fundamental change since the days of *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise* and *The Lady of the Camelias*. Film technique has been developed mainly by seeking to represent reality. Because the filmmaker's material is not make-up and scenery, but photography and sound-recording, the best work in the cinema has been done by those who have remembered what the first inventors never doubted, that the essence of cinematography lies in its power to represent reality."

But I find it difficult to reconcile the structure and choice of his last section with his thesis.

It begins beautifully with a magnificent sequence from Stiller's *The Old Manor*. Then comes the river crossing from *The Covered Wagon* (speaking personally once again, I would have chosen, from the point of view of realism, the Indian attack on the encampment—do you remember the horse going over the cliff?) Then—after a perfunctory morsel of Mix—we are treated to three comparisons. The first is between Eisenstein's mutiny sequence from *Potemkin* and a stagey version of the same thing made in France by Ferdinand Zecca in 1907. The second depicts the clearing of the court room during the Dreyfus investigation, as done by Dieterle in *Emile Zola* (1937) and by George Melies (c. 1900). The third contrasts a scene from *Love from a Stranger* (Britain 1937) with Sarah Bernhardt in *The Lady of the Camelias* (France 1912).

I am no doubt very dull in the head, but I do not see how these contrasts add to the argument. Zecca's *Potemkin* is as wildly funny as you might expect; Eisenstein's mutiny scenes are still dramatic, dynamic, and the whole sequence is still an absolute classic of cutting. But if, as I take it the contrast needed is between theatricalism and realism in the story film, the argument surely can only be effective if two nearly contemporary works are chosen. A big

sequence from a de Mille super would have been a reasonable contrast.

The scene from *Emile Zola* is apparently chosen not for its essential interest, but because it matches the scene from the Melies' film. *Zola* was a magnificent film, but this sequence, torn from its context, means very little in terms of realism or anything else.

Finally we have *Love from a Stranger*—a sequence put in to show that films are still sometimes no more than photographed stage plays. Could we not have taken this for granted? The sequence is merely boring and forms no sort of contrast to the historically interesting excerpt from the Bernhardt film, which might well have been included in the first section.

The film is not yet over. To conclude it we are given three extracts from story films, presumably because they are notable for their realism. Of the first two of these—*Kameradschaft* and *Le Grande Illusion*—I do not think anyone could complain. But why the troopship sequence from *Forewell Agadi*? For myself at least it formed a depressing, lamentable, and very bewildering ending to 9,500 feet of impressive or stimulating material of all sorts.

*Film and Reality* is too important a work to be glibly dismissed with faint or frantic praise. And whatever I may have said about it I am certain that it does, despite the faults I have stated, form a remarkable document which will be of great use to students and to all others interested in the realistic approach to cinema. It would be interesting to make a parallel job called *Film and Reality No. II*, which would be devoted, not to aesthetic considerations, but to a study of the sociological approach combined with the new developments in technique which arose from the desire of realist film-makers (especially in Britain, due to Grierson's genius to find more vivid means of expression. Himself a pioneer in this field, I am certain that Cavalcanti would agree, and would, this time, consult his contemporaries more freely on the selection of the relevant material.

## II. TODAY AND TOMORROW

Not the least valuable aspect of *Film and Reality* lies in the fact that it is bound to stimulate many of us to consider the present state of affairs in the development of the realist film, and to look a little way into the future.

Cavalcanti's survey very properly stops short before September, 1939 . . . Since then we have had two and a half years of war in which needs as well as conditions of film-making have changed very considerably. All available personnel has been pressed into the urgent needs of wartime propaganda and wartime information. Output has increased enormously.

When the war began documentary was no longer in its experimental stage. Realist traditions had by then been firmly established, and the results of the experiments of the previous ten years had been crystallised into several different styles. Nevertheless that static stage, which in any movement is the prelude to complete necrosis, had in no sense been reached. On the contrary, in the years immediately preceding World War II the realist movement was beginning to concern itself firstly with larger and broader treatments of subject matter, and secondly with an increased use of dramatic incident and dialogue (cf. *The Londoners* and *North Sea*, to give but two examples).

In some senses the gulf between the documentary and the realistic film story was narrowing. Not only had the British realist movement

begun to influence film-makers in other countries (most notably the U.S.A., where a vigorous documentary movement was by now established) but also there was, in the studio world, a recrudescence of that realistic approach which had flared up all over the world in the mid-twenties but which had been thoroughly smothered by the coming of sound.

The realist workers in those days were increasingly occupied with internationalism. It wasn't mere chance which found Cavalcanti in Switzerland shooting the material for *We Live in Two Worlds*, or which found Grierson and myself, in the same country, discussing with the International Labour Office plans for world production, distribution, and international exchange of all films of sociological content.

By 1939 the realist movement was all set for a series of major developments.

Where do we stand now?

I am not one of those who believe that war essentially stifles all creative impulse, although I am certain that it limits it. To this it is, I think, correct to add the rider that discipline is good for the creative worker, provided the discipline comes from the right quarters and with the right motives. The motive for making wartime documentaries will be regarded by no one as other than sensible. Indeed, the most striking thing about the last two years of realist film making has been that—if only for lack of any official lead—the documentary workers have evolved their own discipline and done all they can to impose it on themselves. There has, in other words, been no diminution of the basic documentary thesis: "We are propagandists first and film makers second."

Literally hundreds of films have been made during the past two years, and it is perhaps only too easy to forget that their widespread distribution, both in the cinemas and non-theatrically, has given the documentary film an audience coverage infinitely larger than anything it had attained in peacetime.

The urgencies of the moment make for simplicity of construction and treatment. Only in a few major efforts (e.g. *Target for Tonight*) is it possible to elaborate the script and involve oneself in the complications of a large number of interrelated incidents.

I would sum up the existing situation first by claiming that documentary has no cause to be ashamed of its wartime record. Its workers, often under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, have fully carried out the jobs that needed doing. But secondly, I feel that this is no time for complacency. I think all of us feel that much of our production is not up to that level of achievement which we have always set ourselves.

Is it enough to satisfy the demands of official sponsors, however well we do it? It is surely our job, as pioneers (and such we have always been) to be a step ahead of the rest.

Now, and for the remainder of the war, the keyword is "Urgency." Today the realist film needs to achieve greater punch. It must be active. It must without fail and without pause devote itself to the urgencies of the moment with the same dynamic emphasis which marked the revolutionary period of the Soviet film. The social experience of documentary is ideally suited to this propaganda task, which is, firstly to impel immediate and all-out action in the direct crisis of war, and secondly, to pave the way for the post-war drive; both these aims being completely interwoven.

(Continued next page)



(Continued from page 41)

I believe absolutely that the revolutionary technique is now the only technique. Whether you like it or not, we are undergoing a world social revolution here and now, and it is a revolution which must continue after the war, and continue with increasing strength. For that is the only thing the people of Britain are fighting for.

It is today the job of documentary to integrate the immediate war-effort with the facts and implications of radical social and economic changes which are part and parcel of it.

Only from this standpoint can we get into our films the dynamic impulse which will strengthen their propaganda value to this nation and its allies.

The realist tradition is rich in the abilities for the job. The whole trend of the 'thirties was towards this dynamic concept (we said we were trying to make Peace as exciting as War), and the films which were made tended more and more to sacrifice purely aesthetic considerations to the need for pungent comment and the imaginative presentation of facts and problems.

Today the intensification of effort which is so urgently needed depends on an equal intensification of morale-propaganda; and if we don't pull our punches any longer we have a vital contribution to make.

I believe that the future of the realist film (if one can spare a moment to look ahead in such parochial terms) lies in the attitude and action which I have outlined. Our films must be the shock troops of propaganda. It is no longer policy to compromise with timidity—either among ourselves or in others. The documentary movement is part of a continuous process and a continuous progress towards a new deal in life for the peoples of the world. And the only slogan worth having today is "Speed it up!"

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SPRING NUMBER

#### CONTRIBUTORS:

JYMPSON HARMAN

(*Evening News*)

GEORGE H. ELVIN

(*A.C.T.*)

F. L. THOMAS

(*20th Century*)

HECTOR McCULLIE

(*Exhibitor*)

Price 6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

## SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR MARCH—APRIL

The following bookings for March and April are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by the News and Specialised Theatres Association

	Week commencing		Week commencing
Acrobatic Aces		Keep Shooting	29th
The News Theatre, Bristol	April 12th	The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	
A Day at the Soviet Front		Leningrad—Gateway to Soviet Russia	April 12th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	March 29th	The News Theatre, Nottingham	
Aeronautics		Lives in Peril	March 22nd
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 5th	The News Theatre, Birmingham	22nd
A Good Time For a Dime		The News Theatre, Bristol	29th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	March 22nd	Mahbo Beah Party	April 12th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	29th	Man the Enigma	5th
The News Theatre, Leeds	29th	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	April 5th	March of Time—Battlefields of the Pacific	March 26th
A Gentleman's Gentleman		The World's News Theatre, W.2	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	March 22nd	March of Time—Main Street U.S.A.	22nd
At the Stroke of Twelve		The News Theatre, Nottingham	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	March 29th	March of Time—7th Year, No. 9	April 5th
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 5th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	
Baggage Buster		March of Time—7th Year, No. 10	March 30th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	March 22nd	Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.	March 30th
Bargain Along		March of Time—7th Year, No. 9	April 5th
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 12th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	
Beautiful Outflow		Meet the Stars, No. 5	March 22nd
The News Theatre, Bristol	March 29th	The News Theatre, Leeds	
Comedy Kid		The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 5th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	29th	Meet the Stars, No. 6	12th
Canine Caddy		The News Theatre, Leeds	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	22nd	Mickey's Elephants	12th
The News Theatre, Leeds	22nd	The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	5th
World's News Theatre, W.2	22nd	More Trifles of Importance	March 22nd
Canine Sketches		The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 12th	Moob and the Flame	26th
Capital City Washington		Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.	26th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	March 29th	Northern Neighbours	29th
Caribbean Sentinel		The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 5th	Old Natchez of Mississippi	29th
Cavalcade of San Francisco		The News Theatre, Nottingham	
The News Theatre, Bristol	March 22nd	Old New Orleans	22nd
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	29th	The News Theatre, Bristol	April 12th
The News Theatre, Leeds	29th	The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	12th
Common Heritage		Old New Orleans	March 29th
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	March 30th	The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	30th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 12th	The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	30th
Delhi		The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 5th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	March 29th	Plane Sailing	March 29th
Diving Thrills		The News Theatre, Manchester	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 12th	Please Answer	April 5th
Dog Obedience		The News Theatre, Leeds	March 22nd
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	5th	Queen Cotton	29th
Donald's Nephews		The Tatler Theatre, Chester	
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	March 23rd	Raising Sailors	29th
Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	26th	The News Theatre, Nottingham	29th
Elmer's Good Turn		Russian Salad	29th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	22nd	So You Think You Know Your Music, No. 1	29th
Fighting Frodo		The News Theatre, Leeds	29th
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 12th	Sage Fright	29th
Fire Cheese		The Tatler Theatre, Chester	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 5th	Stone	April 12th
The News Theatre, Leeds	12th	The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 12th
Fools who made History, No. 2		Stranger than Fiction, 88	12th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	March 22nd	The News Theatre, Nottingham	
Forgotten Man		San Fun	March 26th
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 5th	Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	26th
The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	12th	Tree Up	22nd
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	12th	The News Theatre, Bristol	22nd
Foundations of the Empire		The Carpenters	22nd
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	March 22nd	Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	22nd
Free France		The Great Meddler	23rd
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	29th	The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	
Fresh Fish		The Gun	April 12th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	22nd	The Happiest Man on Earth	March 29th
Full Circle		The Tatler Theatre, Chester	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 12th	The Hockey Champ	23rd
George Washington Country Gentlemen		The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	
The News Theatre, Manchester	12th	Training Police Horses	April 12th
Going Places, No. 63		The Tatler Theatre, Nottingham	12th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	March 22nd	Two Little Orphans	March 22nd
Going Places, No. 86		The News Theatre, Nottingham	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	April 5th	Tyneside	23rd
Green Girdle		Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	26th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	March 29th	Willie and the Moose	March 22nd
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April, 12th	The News Theatre, Leeds	29th
Happy Faces		The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	
The News Theatre, Manchester	12th	Western Isles	March 29th
Holiday Highlights		The News Theatre, Birmingham	April 5th
The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	12th	Wise Guys	April 5th
How Goes Chile		World Garden	12th
The News Theatre, Leeds	March 22nd		
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 12th		
Isles of Fate			
The World's News Theatre, W.2	March 22nd		
The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	29th		
Islands of the West Indies			
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 5th		
Jockey's Day			
The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	March 22nd		

# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

## NINTH SCOTTISH AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL

The Scottish Amateur Film Festival has been held annually since 1934. This year the Scottish Film Council is holding a competition to decide the best amateur films produced in Britain during the past eight years.

The outstanding prizewinning films entered in the Festival from 1934-1941 were screened at a public showing in the Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow, on Sunday, March 8th. There were two sessions, one at 3 p.m. for non-fiction films and one at 7 p.m. for fiction films.

The adjudication at previous festivals has been done by well-known film directors like Victor Saville, Anthony Asquith, John Grierson, Cavalcanti and Alfred Hitchcock. On this occasion, however, the public adjudicated. Ballot slips were issued to the audience and the results were announced at the conclusion of each session. The Festival was run this year in aid of the Navy League War Comforts Fund.

**The Cambridge University Film Society reports:** "The Society's present season came to an end with the discussion between Paul Rotha and Karl Meyer held on February 22nd, in connection with a showing of *The Last Laugh*, excerpts from *Caligari* and two recent M.O.I. documentaries—*Our School* and *The Battle of the Books*. At earlier shows during the Lent term were shown *The Rich Bride*, together with *Den Haag*, the six-year-old Dutch *avant-garde* colour, and a couple of British abstracts in colour—Len Lye's *Colour Box* and Norman McLaren's *Love on the Wing*. On February 1st the Society presented Jean Vigo's second feature-length film *L'Atalante* (*Zéro de Conduite* was shown last year) and *The River*. Basil Wright gave a stimulating talk on "Films and Propaganda" on February 8th. During the season programme notes have been contributed by, among others, Basil Wright, Paul Rotha, Richard Massingham, Michael Powell and Forsyth Hardy, and the Society has been privileged to entertain several of those whose films have been shown. It is not proposed to run formal shows during the summer months, but it is hoped to open a fresh season next autumn.

Unfortunately Cavalcanti's *Film and Reality*, booked for the last showing of the season, did not arrive. The Regional Officer of the Ministry of Information stepped into the breach, however, and supplied a representative programme of shorts lasting for two hours. This included *Men of the Lightship*, *Living with Strangers*, *Incident in Moscow* (Telegraph Office), and Grierson's *Battle for Oil*.

**Manchester and District Film Institute Society and Manchester and Salford Film Society reports:** "In the final session of their first joint season 1941-42, the Societies have already presented two standard and two substandard shows. The January show at the Rivoli Cinema had almost entirely a Soviet programme: *We from Kronstadt* proved an admirable revival in these times, and the shorts included *Dugestan*, *Incident in a Moscow Telegraph Office* and *Russian Scenes and Songs*. Trauberg and Kozintsev's *New Babylon* and the American Willard Van Dyck's *Valley*

*Town* were the main items in a substandard show at the Y.M.C.A. on January 17th. For February the standard films have included *Soviet Frontiers on the Danube* and *Joueurs D'Échecs*, while on substandard we have presented *China Fights for Freedom* and Protanazov's Moscow Art Theatre satire, *Marionettes*. We hope to make the March standard show something of an occasion with a premiere of Cavalcanti's new survey of realism, *Film and Reality*, and a visit from the Curator of the National Film Library."

### The Tyneside Film Society:

The Chairman hopes to revive the activities of the Society next autumn. There is reason to think that the drop in the number of subscriptions this spring was due more to the public not realising the absolute necessity of their guaranteeing support in advance, rather than to lack of interest in the Society.

### The Secretary of the Edinburgh Film Guild reports:

"Our recent American programme was voted a great success. The M.G.M. films, *The Old South* and *Forgotten Victory*, are first-rate documentaries—both by the same director, Fred Zinnemann—and can confidently be recommended to Film Societies. The Pacific showing was a premiere—it has, as you may know, just been completed for the British Council. *A Man to Remember* had not been shown widely in Edinburgh when first released, and was new to most people. It was very well received. Harry Watt, who was present, spoke during the interval and paid a tribute to the support Film Societies were giving to the documentary movement. For the next two performances we are showing *Claudine*, with Rotha's *All Those in Favour*, and *Shors*. We are also arranging a special performance of prize-winning amateur films."

**The Manchester and Salford Film Society reports** that *Film and Reality* (35 mm.) was shown at the Rivoli on Sunday, March 22nd, in place of *Rois du Sport*; the shorts included *Guests of Honour*, and *Line to the Tschierwa Hut* (all Cavalcanti films). A questionnaire is to be issued to members of both societies, for indications of their opinion regarding films shown during the season, preferences of features for next season, and general comments and suggestions, for the guidance of the committee. In spite of many difficulties, a very successful season of nine 35 mm. and eight 16 mm. film displays have been held jointly with the Manchester Film Institute Society.

During March the Devon and Exeter Film Society presented two programmes. In the first the feature was Michael Powell's *Edge of the World*; in the second Guitry's *Its Était Neuf Célébraires* was shown. Documentary films are shown in all programmes of this Society, in addition to examples of early comedies.

The Sixth Repository Show of the Belfast Film Institute Society took place on March 21st. The main film was Pagnol's *La Femme du Bonheur*.

Dundee and St. Andrews is still busy beating its own and everybody else's records for membership. It now numbers 950 and the cinema is filled to the brim for all shows. Recent programmes

included *Malania* (Shell Film Unit), *Naples on Baïser du Feu*, and a revival of Disney's *Ferdinand the Bull*.

**The Belfast Film Institute Society reports:** "Three shows have been held so far this year in addition to the three given in the autumn. At the end of February the sixth show of the season had *Geny du Voyage* as main film with *Child Hero's Story* and *Sing a Song of Sixpence*. The seventh show had as its feature *La Femme du Bonheur*, a very popular attraction. Although our normal seasons in peace-time were of six shows only there is a possibility that two or three extra shows may be put on as a late-spring season. Publication of our Monthly Review will probably continue until June. We hope by that date to begin planning a season for next winter."

## CORRESPONDENCE

SIR: As the reviewer of *Three in a Shell-Hole*, a word about Ivor Montagu's word about the review. The function of a reviewer is certainly not to act as a Gallup-poll on audience reaction (a typical plea so often put forward by interested executives in the film trade); otherwise Ivor Montagu would find us writing enthusiastic praise of such anti-Soviet stinkers as *Nimotchka* or *Comrade X*. Anyone who regularly attends popular cinemas knows all about art-object audience relation without the necessity of inquiries from friends; and anybody could have told Ivor Montagu that *Three in a Shell-Hole* would go down like hot cakes with the audience, not because it was good, but because it was Russian. What I object to is the attempt to use the strong bond of friendship between the British and Russian peoples as an argument when discussing a film and its technique. There are too many people about ready to cash in on this east-iron popularity of Russia and it is difficult for us to be happy about a film that is popular in spite of lousy technique. We have already had the disturbing spectacle of Lord Kemsley trying to sell *Our Russian Allies* and Lord Beaverbrook trying to sell Stalin to the British people. The intellectuals may still need a bit of sales talk; but there is no necessity to sell the U.S.S.R. to the people that stopped the "Jolly George" from sailing.

That much said, it is still important that Russian films shown over here should be well made and have a good line, though I admit even bad ones are better than none at all. The point at issue is, was the dubbing successful, not was the film popular? *Three in a Shell-Hole* was bound to be successful, however bad; with true socialist-realism in technique both in idea and production and in its treatment over here it would have been ten times more so. I know it is said that foreign films must have dubbing of some sort for large-scale distribution here. I still maintain that the dubbing on *Three in a Shell-Hole* was stilted and middle-class; and I invite Ivor Montagu to make a trial, in future, of sub-titles or *sotto voce* English interjections if that is the best he can do with lip-synching. Ivor Montagu and I both want as many good Russian films as possible shown over here; if any film is not particularly calculated to help and is also lousy technically, I shall certainly, in a small-circulation film paper, continue to say so.

Yours, etc.,  
FRANK SAINSBURY

Church Street,  
Shoreham, Kent.

(continued on page 44)

## CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 43)

SIR: Is this a private argument? Or can anyone join in? If the latter then I should like to give Mr. Montague a note of the reaction of a cinema audience of slightly over 700 to *Three in a Shell Hole*.

(a) There was a general titter immediately the "dubbed" nurse spoke. Some members even laughed outright;

(b) The film gripped;

(c) There was applause when the film ended.

That reaction seems to agree both with the DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER reviewer and with Mr. Montague. But does it? I believe that this film gripped its audiences for two reasons—the concentration of its pictorial setting and the intensity of its dramatic content. *Three in a Shell-Hole* succeeded despite the dubbing. As for the applause when the film ended, I think this was a tribute to the cameraman coupled with a sense of relief that justice is not always wrapped up in kid.

For a short film like *Three in a Shell-Hole* the producers should have followed Mr. Doan's advice and let the picture tell the story. If, however, it was felt that lip-movement must be reproduced, surely it should have followed that this would be in the language of the people concerned. When the audience tittered it showed its disapproval of the producers' conception of the "cackint" which would be used by Russian women in the heat of battle.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR J. NELSON

6 Hilly Crescent,  
Ayr.

DEAR SIR,—As an engineer and shop steward, I was particularly interested in the M.O.I. article in the February issue of D.N.L. on "Film Shows in Factories"; all the more so because at the large factory where I am employed, we recently had our first M.O.I. film display. At the performance in question, the films presented were *Paramount News Review*, which was very well received, and *From the Four Corners*, which received general adverse criticism, and was withdrawn from subsequent shows to other groups of employees, being replaced with *Sinews of War*, which deals with armament manufacture.

One realises the limited suitable material available for shows of this kind during its pioneering stages the successful development of which will be in some sense retarded, if insufficient consideration of factory psychology is undertaken.

Archaic propaganda of the "Old School Tie" brand casts no ice in the workshop, and it is a waste of time and material to try and put it over. Films of engineering processes are a valuable contribution in their proper time and place, but are not ideal dinner-time subjects to the over-worked engineer, whose morale requires encouragement and enthusiasm in other directions. It would be more in keeping with the workers point of view to couple a British "action documentary" with one of the many new Soviet shorts which are now available, but so difficult to have an opportunity to see.

Perhaps the recent Government changes will bear fruit in a revised policy at the M.O.I. and give our outstanding documentary technicians a broader and more progressive choice in the subject matter.

Yours, etc.,

Manchester 19.

R. CORDWELL.

## No. 3

THE DOG  
AND THE  
SPARROW

R F U

A SHEPHERD'S dog had a master who took no care of him, but often let him suffer the greatest hunger. At last he could bear it no longer; so he took to his heels. On the road he met a sparrow—that said to him, "Why are you so sad, my friend?" "Because," said the dog, "I am very, very hungry, and have nothing to eat." So on they went together into the town; and as they passed by a butcher's shop, the sparrow perched upon the shelf, and pecked and scratched at a steak that lay upon the edge of the shelf, till at last down it fell. Then the dog snapped it up and scrambled away with it into a corner, where he soon ate it all up. So then they both went out upon the high road, and as the weather was warm, they had not gone far before the dog said, "I am very much tired, I should like to take a nap." "Very well," answered the sparrow, "do so, and in the meantime I will perch upon that bush." So the dog stretched himself out on the road and fell fast asleep.

Whilst he slept there came by a cart with a cart drawn by three horses, and loaded with two casks of wine. The sparrow seeing that the cart did not turn out of the way, so as to drive over the dog, called out, "Stop! stop! Mr. Carter, or it shall be the worse for you." But the cart cracked his whip, and drove his cart over the poor dog, so that the wheels crushed him to death. "There," cried the sparrow, "thou cruel villain, thou hast killed my friend the dog. This deed of thine shall cost thee all thou art worth." "Do your worst and welcome," said the brute: "what harm can you do me?" and passed on. But the sparrow crept under the tilt of the cart and pecked at the humps of the casks till she loosened them, and then all the wine ran out. At last the cart looked round and saw that the cart was dripping and the casks quite empty. "What an unlucky wretch I am!" cried he, "Not wretch enough yet!" said the sparrow, as she alighted upon the head of one of the horses, and pecked at him till he reared up and kicked. When the cart saw this, he drew out his hatchet and aimed a blow at the sparrow; but she flew away, and the blow fell upon the poor horse's head with such force that he fell down dead. "Unlucky wretch that I am!" cried he, "Not wretch enough yet!" said the sparrow, and she had soon perched on the second and third horses, so that in his fury he had killed them too. "Alas! miserable wretch that I am!" cried he, "Not wretch enough yet!" answered the sparrow as she flew away: "Now I will plague and punish thee at thy own house."

The cart was forced at last to leave his cart behind him, and to go home overflowing with rage and vexation. "Alas! husband," cried his wife, "A wicked bird has come into the house and brought with her all the birds in the world, I am sure, and they have fallen upon our eorn in the loft, and are eating it up at such a rate!" "Unlucky wretch that I am!" cried the cart, for he saw that the eorn was almost all gone. "Not wretch enough yet!" said the sparrow, perched on the window-seat; "thy deed shall cost thee thy life yet!" Then he became mad and blind with rage and struck the window-seat with such force that he cleft it in two, and as the sparrow flew from place to place, the cart and his wife were so furious, that they broke all their furniture, glasses, chairs, benches, the table and at last the walls, without touching the bird at all. In the end, however, they caught her; but the sparrow began to flutter about and cried, "Carter! it shall cost thee thy life yet!" With that he could wait no longer; so he gave his wife the hatchet, and cried, "Wife, strike at the bird and kill her in my hand." Then the wife struck; but as women will, she missed her aim, and hit her husband on the head so that he fell down dead, and the sparrow flew quietly home to her nest.

## REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958-9

# MINISTRY OF INFORMATION FILMS

By VICTOR SELIGMAN

Hereunder we publish an interesting and controversial point of view from the exhibitor's side

AS A RENTER of documentary shorts, for some considerable time prior to the outbreak of the war, I have been in a position to study the exhibitor's reaction to this type of short film and although I now handle features as well as shorts, I have never lost the interest I first felt for what is undoubtedly the most progressive branch of the film industry. My present territory is almost entirely devoted to single-feature programmes, which lend themselves admirably to the exploitation and exhibition of M.O.I. shorts, but owing to the initial bad handling of these subjects, the public has very little opportunity of judging them on their own merits.

Before the M.O.I. took over the distribution of documentaries, the few that were available were frequently handicapped by shortage of funds, and the strong sales resistance of the average exhibitor who was unable to appreciate the entertainment value of these pioneer productions. Nevertheless some admirable pictures were turned out by a band of enthusiasts and eventually a market was created for them by interesting enterprising exhibitors in the new art of the documentary, who were gratified to find that the audience responded favourably when this type of short was included in the programme, even going so far as to congratulate the management on the change from the average commercial American short. In addition to documentaries independently produced there were the sponsored shorts, which with strong financial backing could be more lavishly produced, and were, as a rule, useful subjects for any programme.

When the war started and the M.O.I. embodied film distribution in their programme, I, for one, felt the golden opportunity had at last arrived for documentary technicians and directors, and these films handled and sold with the M.O.I. backing, would be given the utmost Ministerial support, be widely shown, and eventually sought for and welcomed by the average film-goer, whose taste requires educating to appreciate what is actually the finer side of the film industry. It seems incredible that the Ministry could have so mis-handled the whole question of documentaries, but from the time they were taken under the wing of the M.O.I. these pictures have fallen steadily into disrepute. First of all, the small company of the original makers of these films, who can be relied upon to turn out a worth-while subject, have been joined by many more technicians and directors, some of them quite incapable of making even an average picture. The exhibitor is requested, as a favour, to include one of the shorts in his programme, and frequently they are shown at any time when they will not interfere with the programme proper. The M.O.I. not only allow British quota on these films but supply them free of charge. Surely this very prosperous industry should not be allowed to show a 5-minute film which ranks as *British quota*, as their only contribution to the war effort.

The quota value of M.O.I. films enables the Exhibitor to book a number of American shorts to make up his programme, and sometimes the length of these shorts leaves very little room for even a 5-minute M.O.I. film, with the result in some cinemas, where I have attended the per-

formance, the Ministry film is shown in the interval between houses whilst the audience is coming in for the performance, before the show begins, and whilst the lights are up.

As a result of the cheaply and badly made M.O.I. films, even in those cinemas where the presentation is properly done, that section of the public who occupy the cheaper seats give vent to an audible groan when M.O.I. appears on the credit titles.

No criticism as set out above should be entirely destructive, and I, therefore, make the following suggestions—

1. The Exhibitor should pay a reasonable price to the Ministry for his M.O.I. films. This would ensure a proper place in the programme, as unfortunately nothing given free of charge is really appreciated.
2. A well-known North Country exhibitor speaking to me recently about the reaction of the public to a M.O.I. film, suggested that the best method of getting over the disrepute into which M.O.I. films had fallen, would be to show credit titles, giving names of director, cameramen, etc., without mention of the M.O.I. which could be reserved for the closing title. This is elementary psychology.
3. The films supplied should not count as quota

but be neutral (thus making a market for independent short producers, both now and after the war).

4. Films should be issued once a fortnight instead of once a week, as in towns where the change of programme is invariably twice-weekly, and where every cinema in the town is showing the same M.O.I. short, the exhibitor keeps the film on his shelf for the latter half of the week.

5. In order to show appreciation to the exhibitor screening and paying for M.O.I. films, a plaque should be issued to him, something on the lines of the one supplied by Western Electric, and could read something like this, "This Cinema is rendering National Service by showing M.O.I. short films."

6. Only directors who are capable of turning out a satisfactory film should be allowed to handle M.O.I. productions.

I feel sure that if these suggestions were given consideration and where possible, acted upon, the whole outlook towards M.O.I. films would be considerably altered, and the revenue accruing to the Ministry would help to put their films on a paying basis, and furthermore any message which the M.O.I. wish to get over to the public would stand more chance of impressing the audience seeing the film.

## SUMMONS TO ARTISTS

Reprinted by permission of "Soviet War News Weekly"

"PRAVDA" writes:—

"It is not only factories, workshops and collective farms that are to-day helping the Red Army to smash the enemy. We know what a tremendous part is also played in our defence by the political education of the masses. Day by day our press, our literature, songs, music, theatres, paintings, posters and films are helping our people to organise their forces for the war. That is why we are justified in making high demands of all forms of Soviet art.

"Co-ordinated action by all arms was of decisive significance in the battles for Moscow, Leningrad, Sevastopol, Rostov and hundreds of other towns and villages. Our strength resides in this co-ordinated activity by all sections of the Red Army. But art, too, is a weapon which must to-day be applied completely to the service of the Red Army.

"Twenty-four years of Soviet power have shown the part played by artists in the most difficult periods of the life of our people. Not long ago the entire country followed with great emotion the filmed speech made by Stalin at the meeting of the Moscow Soviet on November 6th, and his speech at the Red Army parade on November 7th. Millions of people lived through an unforgettable experience. The impression left by the film was tremendous. Another documentary film is now coming to the screen—*The Defeat of the German Troops before Moscow*.

This film shows with exceptional force the men and commanders of the Red Army, and their unshakable confidence in the victory of our cause.

"Let our playwrights, too, use all their genius so that our actors from the theatre stage may inspire the people with burning patriotic images, with sharp satire against the enemy, with songs and music. Our playwrights are indebted to the people. They have not done sufficient to enable our theatre, which possesses such glorious traditions, to march in step with the Red Army.

"Many but far from all our poets have found words to present the image of these grim days to our people. Let them write as Mayakovsky dreamed, making the pen the bayonet's equal, so that their words may fire men's hearts as did the poems of Pushkin and Lermontov.

"Let playwrights and composers, poets, writers and painters praise the heroic deeds of the Red Army and the entire Soviet people. Their creations in these days of war, in the service of the Red Army, will hasten victory over the enemy. Let them inspire the entire people and our Red Army to further relentless struggle, so that our warriors march to battle with songs of joy, courage and terror to the enemy. Every picture painted by the artist, every scene shot in a film, every newspaper column written by a novelist or poet must be a well-placed shot against the enemy."



## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

THE formation of a branch of the Federation of Ayrshire Scientific Film Societies in the north of the county has succeeded in a solid if unspectacular manner. The **Ardrrossan Society** is organised and managed by the Association of Scientific Workers in conjunction with the Council of the Federation. Difficulties have arisen in starting off the Society, although with five successful shows to date the local committee feel that the worst of the teething troubles are over. There are 100 members of whom (despite travelling inconveniences) 70-80 have attended each meeting. Their enthusiasm is encouraging so that the outlook for next season is promising; and a substantial membership increase may be anticipated. Members have shown commendable interest in the films shown. The results of the appraisals to date are a valuable indication of the most popular type of film and a useful guide to the building of future programmes. Mr. Stewart Paterson is president and Mr. W. T. Cunningham secretary of the Society.

The desirability of forming a Scientific Film Society in **Dalmellington** (Ayrshire) was discussed last October by senior officials of the local mining company, the head masters and science staffs of the schools, and representatives of the local clergy and medical profession. From the outset it was obvious that the success of the venture would depend on the good-will of the popular landlord of a local hostelry. Indeed the Society would have been still-born but for the sound projector, comfortable lounge and refreshments placed at its disposal by Mr. Joe McCardle, of the Eglington Hotel, who also undertakes the duties of projectionist. Since mid-November the Society has held six meetings. Thirty-seven members joined within the first fortnight of its formation. As the accommodation in the hotel lounge is limited the membership list had to be closed. The Society is affiliated to the Federation of Ayrshire Scientific Film Societies, the Council of which books most of the programmes as well as undertaking some of the secretarial work. The present feeling is that, rather than expand, the Society should continue, for the 1942-43 season at least, in its present form with a restricted membership and comfortable meeting place. The secretary is Dr. E. S. Lee.

### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(continued from page 37)

baties episode, provide modest excitement in a film which is more remarkable for observation than for drama. *Ferry Pilot* is beautifully made and remarkable for Pat Jackson's handling of a small group of pilots around whom the action revolves and who are skilfully sketched in as very human and pleasant people.

*Propaganda Value.* The film reminds us of the complexity of jobs which make up the machinery of modern warfare. It suggests also that friendly people, with a sense of humour and a deep love of their craft, may be no less efficient than the grim automata beloved of Nazi ideologists, a reminder that, if he is given his head, the British craftsman, whether he be an engineer or an air pilot, is a good enough man to win the war.



## STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



### THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2

MERTON PARK STUDIOS, 269 KINGSTON RD, S.W.19

# DOCUMENTARY AND EDUCATION

(By EDITH MANVELL)

THERE is no greater indictment of our general educational system than that at this time when initiative, competence and co-operation in every branch of our national war effort is needed, there is so much muddle, indecision, and failure to cope with emergencies. The result of this lack of co-ordination and of the desire to pass on the responsibility for action to someone else means that the most urgent things do not get done. Whilst we delay and hesitate and ignore the lessons of our disasters, our national prestige declines.

As long as the school curriculum continues to make little provision for making people aware of the obligations of citizenship, other methods must be used to arouse this consciousness in the general public. The press, the film and the radio are the principal channels for conveying information. They can influence public opinion and rouse the interest of the greatest number of people simultaneously. The responsibility of giving the right sort of information rest in the hands of those who control these three services. The greatest moral integrity on the part of those who wield such power is therefore essential.

The film is the only one of these services which can make its appeal to a large gathering of people who have come together individually and form a temporary community whose reactions can be observed. People go to the cinema to be entertained and not for instruction; but if a documentary film presents a theme which is related to a human experience with which they are in sympathy or which they share, then the audience appreciates it and it will have a direct influence on their attitude of mind towards the problem which has been presented.

In these days of upheaval, when homes are broken up, and families separated, when a feeling of uncertainty and frustration and boredom makes decent people doubt their old ideals and distorts their sense of values, a film like *They Also Serve* restores the sanity of human kindness and neighbourly common sense. There is nothing spectacular, nothing consciously heroic about this story of a woman who serves the needs of her family, who rubs her husband's rheumatic back when he comes home from work, who helps her young neighbours, and who by her patience and friendly example makes her rather selfish daughter feel quietly ashamed of herself. This film is essentially human and free from the taint of sentimentality or a patronising attitude. It is for the homes of such people, for the most fundamental of human relationships, that we are fighting. All the qualities which the mother in *They Also Serve* shows are needed in the efficient running of this war for the people.

It is possible through films of this nature to do something which neither lecturing or preaching can do. For instance if more films on evacuation could have been treated in this way and widely shown in reception areas and in those towns from which women and children were evacuated, the insurmountable psychological problems might have been humanly solved instead of being officially ignored. *Living with Strangers* does, indeed, go some way towards presenting the problem properly. There is a need for these "social" films which frankly present themes which deal with those problems which harass so many people; problems which assume gigantic proportions until a sympathetic

and understanding person restores a sense of balance and wisely guides a worried community to find its own solution to them.

In a society which regarded education as a social service instead of as a means of instilling a lot of miscellaneous facts and arbitrary rules of conduct into the minds of more or less unwilling victims, many of the difficulties which beset adult life would never arise. But as it is, few people have been encouraged to combine competence with human understanding when taking the initiative or making decisions. Only the anti-social and selfish people seem capable of being efficient; the rest of the community just drifts along, waiting to be told what to do, making mistakes, and correcting them by bitter experience. The right kind of education would avoid much of this, or at least it could set things going along the right lines.

Films can show us how sensible and competent people get on with the most ordinary jobs whether they are directly concerned with the war effort or with the welfare of people who have other responsibilities. How, for instance, does the housewife combine home duties with work in a factory? Some women can do it, others get in an awful muddle and the home and the work suffer in consequence.

I should like to see a film on infant welfare, not as an instructional film made in an institution run by a highly trained staff, but in the home of a woman like the mother in *They Also Serve*—a working class home such as many women have to live in. Where conditions are bad, the criticism implied might rouse the social consciousness of those who see the film and make those who themselves live in such conditions aware that they have a right to something better after this war is over. Another film could treat the theme of the nursery school from a new angle: that is, in its influence on the home life of the child who attends such a school. Do the children who go to these schools live in two worlds? Are their minds confused by having to change over twice a day from one environment to another? Are they bewildered by having to make a rapid mental readjustment when they get home, where they may get a "box on the ears" for doing something which at school they are encouraged to do? Are the parents being educated as well as the children, or do they send

them to school because they do not want the trouble and responsibility of looking after them? Though many institutions offer better conditions than many homes, they can never supplant the home, nor should they. It is for the people that the fight goes on and against such things as bad housing—bad cooking and housekeeping ignorance and low standards of living. It is also against similar inefficiency and lack of responsibility in national affairs that we are struggling.

Many films, simple, short and direct would be better than a few long films which are too comprehensive. Not only should they appear in cinemas just once, but they should be available for clubs, welfare centres and other institutions, through the local library projection service as the need arises.

Post-war reconstruction will not be just a matter of rebuilding our devastated cities, nor should it be left entirely to governing bodies to carry out. Reconstruction will mean very little if the greatest problems of modern civilisation—the spiritual or psychological aspect of reconstruction—is neglected.

This is one subject which is going to cause a lot of trouble in the future, but whether it will ever come in the province of documentary films depends on its social application. That is, the religious and moral education which is going to be inflicted on people, especially school children, in the future. Is it going to be left in the hands of professional theologians to dictate on these matters, or are people going to ask that moral upbringing in the future must be based on the development of a sense of social and individual responsibility to the community, and the positive idea of service as something which is worthwhile because it contributes to the happiness of others? What will meet with official approval in this matter may leave the public indifferent. The mass of people will not be impressed by religious revivals; they will continue to drift on in a rather purposeless manner, gradually losing their sense of values, unless some moral objective replaces the unprogressive ideas of controversial theology or the sentimentality of many of its disciples. People to-day want to feel that there is a real purpose in being alive, not just as individuals but as the founders of a new kind of community where vital issues are not entirely based on physical needs. Can this unformed, this rather vague urge to a new ideal be expressed through the medium of film?



# FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made.

F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Australian Trade Publicity Film Library**. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3, sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Central Film Department**, 3 Hanover Street, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1941. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses for 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**British Instructional Films**, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; Pathé Gazettes and Pathé-tones; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Canadian Pacific Film Library**. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity**. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

**Central Council for Health Education**. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*.

35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

**Central Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Dominion of New Zealand Film Library**. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

**Educational Films Bureau**, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Educational General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak, Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Soldiers with Wings*, *Britain's R.A.F.*, *Dutch East Indies*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome and Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Heaton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts. 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association**, Ltd. Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

APRIL, 1942

## CONTENTS

AUSTERITY?	49
NOTES OF THE MONTH	50
INDIA—A SECOND CHANCE	51
MORE SCHOOL FILMS by Oliver Bell	52
U.S.A. FILM NEEDS	53
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	54
PROPAGANDA OR AESTHETICS?	56
FILM OF THE MONTH	58
WOMEN AND PROPAGANDA by Edith Marvell	59
WE HAVE OUR TROUBLES TOO! by Mary Losey	60
FILM SOCIETY NEWS	61
"OUR FILM"—by Ralph Bond	63
ARMY FILMS—by R. S. Miles	64

VOL 3 NO 4

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## AUSTERITY?

ON THE 21st March, the 931st day of the war, in a West End food shop, two women stopped at the vegetable counter and asked the price of the French beans. The man said, "Seven and six a pound, Madam." One woman turned to the other and said, "It's incredible." The shopman said, "Yes it is, isn't it. Last week they were twenty-five shillings a pound."

And so with the new French beans and the spring of the third ear of the war, a great call goes out from our various leaders, big and small, for a greater war effort. Austerity—urgency and all things nasty.

(Johnson put away the brandy—told the girl in the spare room to get out—and lay out my hair shirt.)

The one thing that seems to have missed them is that it is difficult to be urgent unless you have some pretty solid idea to be urgent about. If you are urgent just for the sake of being urgent, it's like a broody hen sitting on a nest with china eggs in it. What's the good of being austere unless you have to. All this business of scourging and hair shirts, deliberately not eating, sleeping in a stone cell seems to be very tautonic. At least it is the kind of thing that the German leaders recommend for the German people.

There is quite certainly a lack of urgency in this country, but it comes from a people who have been mobilised for over two and half years, and even now do not feel that they are really involved in the war.

The people of Britain are most likely the most grown-up people in the world. Everything that has happened to a people has happened to them and they know by experience what is right and what is wrong.

Everywhere people are talking. A soldier says, "The guns are not too close together and so when we are firing on a traverse, the crew of B gun have to leave their gun while A gun fires—they'd be blown off if they didn't." A woman in an aircraft factory says, "The owners of the factory take 7½ per cent on all wages earned. There are twenty thousand people in the factory. Say the average wage is five pounds a week, that means the employers rake in £7,500 a week profit on their employees."

Everywhere people are complaining about the way the war is run. This most likely happens in any country at war—because war is anyway so appallingly inefficient—but if you have a people who now and believe in what they are fighting for, they will get over the difficulties.

Continually since the war started the country has been fed with series of slogans of one kind or another which are supposed to

interest the people in the war—to give them inspiration to fight and endure. Does anyone think that these mature English people are going to give everything (including their lives) for politicians' catch phrases? The answer is obviously—No. The British people can and have won more difficult battles than this one—and they are still the only people the Germans are afraid of. But the old ideas they fought for are worn out. Telling people to be austere and urgent, giving them slogans, is not going to make them fight. If they have something to fight for they will soon become urgent and make their own slogans—as the people of Russia have done. Obviously high-powered propaganda coming from every source of information is going to cover up the truth to a certain extent, but surely this is not the kind of thing we are working for.

It's not what we are supposed to be fighting for anyway. The greatest job of propaganda would be to put our own country in order. Conscript every man and woman in the country. Conscript all land, all raw materials. Conscript all means of production. Two weeks ago in Sheffield outside a smart hotel were 73 cars. Inside there was a very good dinner for 10s. 6d. Outside again were streams of factory workers, on the way home, carrying newspapers with a speech on austerity. Can anyone in their right minds think that when those factory workers go on the job in the morning—these people who have been doing an eleven-hour, six-day week for two years or more—can anyone believe that they will start their machines more determinedly next morning.

The amazing thing is that the people who have done so much with so little encouragement still stick at it. They dig up a million allotments when asked to, and they still see people around them who have all the food of all the kinds they want. They willingly wait patiently in queues—Service people stand willingly for a twelve-hour train journey—they accept the loss of husbands and brothers at sea, and they still see a mass of private cars around them. They see a thousand breaches of decency, a thousand costly mistakes, and still they keep on.

The apparent strategy of the war over the last year, as far as Britain itself is concerned, seems to be not unlike that of the first year of the war. The Germans evidently believe that a democracy will not move unless it has to. That if a country is held in a state of emergency for too long, it will fall to pieces internally. They were right about France, but they have been wrong about Britain. First the people were more mature and more stable than the French, and secondly Russia's fight gave them inspiration at the most dangerous moment. But even so, if the Germans apply the "leave



and let go stale" policy, we have obviously not got to sit and just live on our hump. A year's breather at home should be a time to recuperate and, once that is done, to take up an aggressive policy for everyone in the country. And an aggressive policy cannot be raised on worn-out words. The Germans know that the war depends on the people of the country as a whole. Especially on the ordinary people who do most of the foot slogging. The one thing the Germans have worked on in Britain, as far as the ordinary people are concerned, is that Britain is not seriously in the war. They have told America the same thing about us and with a certain amount of success up until December 7th. They told it to Australia, India, Burma, Russia, South America, South Africa, also with a certain amount of success.

The year's pause should have been used to build up internal unity with every means possible. We should have built up a feeling that everyone in the country is equally in the war; that everyone is sharing equally; that unequal privileges have been abolished; that no one is making a profit out of the country's troubles. This is obviously what the people want. This is the kind of feeling that will increase production, that will win battles. This is what will gain the confidence of our allies and the neutrals.

A certain amount has been done towards levelling up the country during the past year. One little thing like abolishing the basic petrol ration will gain more enthusiasm and greater support for the war than twenty speeches, no matter how sincere they are. At the moment if Britain started to put her house in order on a deliberate plan and with a good propaganda campaign for home and abroad, it might cut the length of the war by half. It would certainly give everyone confidence and something solid, something easily understood, to fight for.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The End of an Argument

IT IS WITH some regret that we find it necessary to devote a great deal of valuable space in this issue to questions arising from the British Film Institute's production *Film and Reality*—a film which was reviewed at considerable length by Basil Wright in last month's issue. The major part of the documentary movement was from the beginning opposed to the production of this film, particularly those sequences dealing with the British movement, firstly, because the time seemed scarcely to be ripe, and secondly because such an attempt at contemporary historical record was felt to be a task better suited to a production committee than to an individual. Attempts were made by the Association of Realist Film Producers, the documentary movement's representative organisation, to influence the production, but without success. The sponsors of the film were not prepared to consult the documentary movement as a whole in this matter. Once the film had been completed, however, the Editorial Board of D.N.L. felt that this production must not be allowed to become the cause of internal quarrels between documentary personnel at a time when documentary energies are directed to more important objectives. We were aware that the danger existed that the film might be widely accepted as accurately representative of the work of the documentary movement. We were also aware that the release of the film, which incidentally contains significant omissions and inaccuracies, was being made the occasion of unfortunate personal recriminations. We nevertheless hoped that these parochial excitements would in time die down and that *Film and Reality* would one day be substituted by a record which would be more accurate and less subject to prejudice. Unfortunately, it has proved impossible for us to let the matter rest. We publish a letter from Mr. Lindgren of the British Film Institute which brings the issues to a point where they can no longer be ignored. It becomes clear that the controversy has taken a turn which fundamentally affects the purpose of documentary and the contribution which it can make to the war effort. The disagreement is no longer between personalities but between those who see the documentary movement primarily as a means of propaganda and those who would regard

it narrowly as an aesthetic form divorced from any specific purpose. At this time the documentary film makers cannot afford to play into the hands of those who would relegate them to the rôle of the "carriers-out" of propaganda ideas provided for them from outside the movement. The documentary film movement as it was created and developed under John Grierson was and still is directed to one purpose and to one purpose only—the formation of a body of skilled propagandists trained to express their propaganda ideas by means of film. We cannot allow to pass in silence any statement which suggests that documentary is nothing more than a tool lying ready to the hand of our amateur propagandists. It is as professional propagandists then, as well as film-makers, that we endorse Basil Wright's reply to Mr. Lindgren's letter. It represents our final word on *Film and Reality*. We do not propose to devote further space to the consideration of a film which has achieved so much unpleasantness.

### Goodbye, Cassandra

A CORRESPONDENT WRITES: "One of the curious things about the debate in Parliament and the Press on the *Daily Mirror* was the fact that nearly everybody who discussed the paper so knowingly and patronisingly was obviously very seldom in the habit of reading it at all. They talked in terms of sensationalism and salaciousness, of lurid stories of rape and pictures of pretty nudes, which may have been true five years ago, but of which today *Jane* in her perpetual deshabille is the sole pale survivor. The fact is that over the past few years, and particularly since the beginning of the War, the *Daily Mirror* has changed out of recognition. It has adopted a plain, honest, straightforward policy and forceful critical line, and this has made it in a very special sense (which the wiseacre critics obviously do not appreciate) the Forces' paper. The Forces see printed in it the things they are saying themselves, and that they want to see said and the whole paper has become very much a part of their lives—Popeye and Capt. Reilly-Fjoll, I Assure You, and Live Letterbox, W.M. and, most of all, Cassandra. For seven years William Connor has been writing *Cassandra* in that simple straight Anglo-Saxon language of his. A touch of Beachcomber, a touch of Swift, the plain style of Defoe and through it all the sincerity of his Socialist faith and his honest anger at any humbugs, stupidity, cruelty or crookery. Isolationists, appeasers, Quislings, American exhibitionists, cheapsters, dividenders, the Free English, profiteers, bureaucrats and Fascists, in every country from Hitler down,—in fact all enemies of the common man, have all been named and held up to public obloquy in his column. *Cassandra* was one of the few pieces of journalism which named and attacked evil personalities as freely and fearlessly as the working man in the pub. And now *Cassandra* has to go. A fighter to the last, he has refused to compromise with the mealy-mouthed back-scratchers and place-seekers. His last article was a fine statement of what he stands for, what he has always fought for and still fights for. Here are his last words: "Mr. Morrison can have my pen—but not my conscience. Mr. Morrison can have my silence—but not my self-respect." *Cassandra* has gone, but we have by no means heard the last of William Connor.

### Propaganda Policy

WE ARE indebted to the *Tatler* for the following war-winning sentiments: "The programme at the Regal also contained an, in some ways, excellent short M.O.I. film entitled *Builders*. This showed the enormous amount of work being done in the building line in parts of the country not habitually visited by the general public. The film strikes a note of commiseration for the men engaged in this work, and I am not quite sure about this. Bricklaying cannot be much fun at the best of times, and it doesn't seem to me to matter in what part of the country one does it. The lack of home comforts? But there are hundreds of thousands of men lacking home comforts at the moment, and the point is not a good one to make. This film also suggests that if after the war we continue pouring out money now devoted to the war upon improving the workers' conditions, this country will find itself in Paradise. It won't; it will find itself in bankruptcy. No, I take it that the business of the M.O.I. films is (a) not to argue, and (b) not to argue unsoundly."

## INDIA—A SECOND CHANCE

In April, 1942, the efforts of the Government of this country and the Congress Party of India to reach agreement on a series of proposals put forward by the Cabinet, broke down completely. India had held the headlines during the days which led up to this strange and disheartening event. The names Nehru, Jinnah and Azad were heard in buses and pubs. The people of this country for once took an interest in the vast sub-continent of Hindustan. They knew that Sir Stafford Cripps had become a modern Hercules, although sometimes when they really thought about it, they were not quite certain why he had become so famous, so much a symbol of hope. They knew too, that Nehru had been at Harrow and that it was very hot in Delhi. They were perhaps a little surprised that the only two famous figures whom they really connected with India should not be holding the centre of the stage—that the Viceroy and the Mahatma were both playing minor parts. But it was all going to be all right. Hercules was there.

The excitement was kept up. Hopes ran high. India was going to work with us, to fight with us and to win with us. Even the Japanese seemed to be helping by bombing Trincomalee and Cocos and almost at the height of the negotiations. There was going to be a new brotherhood, new words of friendship on a clean slate and equal partnership in a new constitution.

Then suddenly everything changed. Within two days there was a complete collapse. Sir Stafford took his much delayed aerial departure and Nehru talked in a garden. Hercules had failed and, crying "No re-terminations," was on his way home.

It is not the purpose of this article to enquire into the reasons for the failure of yet another mission, although such an enquiry would be interesting even if it was also disheartening. One might argue that statesmen are elected and paid to do a job for which years of training and experience have fitted them, and that if they continually fail to do their jobs, they are no more to be condoned with than a plumber who connects the water pipes to the gas jets. In fact, judging by the streams of cold water which are continually being poured upon the British people, from sources which should have produced warming flames, it would be a good thing to consider occasionally exactly what sort of plumbers we have got.

But it is more to our purpose at the moment to enquire into and consider the truly appalling problem confronting our propaganda services so far as India is concerned.

Germany and Japan have not stopped but have redoubled their propaganda efforts. Sometimes India is promised equal partnership, and sometimes she is offered her share of a new Asiatic order. She is also frequently offered the sun, moon and the stars, together with easy recipes for obtaining these alluring objects. These offers do not fall upon deaf ears. The people who listen to them no doubt do so all the more eagerly because of their recent intense disappointment. They do not necessarily believe them but they would like to believe them and this alone will prepare the ground. It is no good us sitting back and saying that it is India's own fault and it would not be any good doing that whether it were true or not.

Like it or not, we must be certain of one thing in the coming weeks, and that is that at least India will not hinder our efforts to fight the Japanese. There must be no repetition of Burma where thousands of Burmeses fought against us, preferring Japanese to British domination.

And how are we to ensure that this shall not happen? What message have we got to give to India? Ever since the war started the efforts of many people have been directed to persuading India that she should come into the war. Their efforts have been in vain.

War propaganda committees set up in India, the press, the radio, poster and film have done their damndest and failed: India remained unmoved. Propaganda breaks down as it will always break down if it has nothing of the heart to offer.

If the problem confronting propaganda was difficult then, consider what it is now. There was always the faint hope in the Indian mind that one day Britain would recognise India's right to independence; ignoring the war was one way of constantly reminding us of that hope, and this did form some sort of a bridge across which a few of our propaganda messages could travel. Now even that link has gone.

We were told during the negotiations in Delhi that the eyes of Egypt were on India, and this was doubtless true of Ceylon, the African Colonies and the West Indies. To the whole world it looked like a test case, a test of our good intentions, of our success or failure in giving self-government to the peoples under our flag. To the peoples of our colonies it must have looked like the beginning of a new era.

The reaction everywhere must have been profound. We had failed; and whichever side was to blame it did not make any difference. There would be plenty of voices ready to say

that we had never meant to succeed and plenty of people ready to listen. And perhaps it is better so. Who would not rather be thought wicked than stupid?

This is a depressing picture. It establishes a fact that cannot be repeated too often and that is that long term propaganda must always have something to say, must carry a message of hope, of promises that can be fulfilled, but it also suggests that we cannot now carry out any effectual propaganda in India and even perhaps in many other places.

But surely we have something to say. Our cupboard cannot be quite as bare of hope as one would imagine from the way in which we keep the door so discreetly shut. This is not only a war of defence, of defending ourselves and our possessions and our many, dusty prejudices. Surely it is a war of attack, of a military and a mental assault. Now is the time when the mind must move forward as well as the sword.

Already there are signs that perhaps all is not lost. In the news reports, in people's minds, is hope that something may yet be done. After the first shock of disappointment, people have rallied. We have stated that our offer still stands. Indian politicians are said to be having further discussions among themselves. Perhaps something will be agreed upon yet.

Now is the time for propaganda to get to work. Ever since the negotiations started it has at last had something to say and, now that they are over, its job is not finished. It can build on the goodwill left behind. Britain has shown a willingness to move forward and even if the step was faltering at least we hope the goodwill was there. Let the propaganda services make the most of their opportunity now, for they can be certain that their opponents are making the most of theirs. By newspaper, radio and film India must be constantly assured that the offer still stands and that we are prepared to discuss that offer with them.

There is no need to wait for something new to be said, there is enough material ready, waiting to be used. And it is good material because, although there is not much of it, it is at least honest. Against the airy castles being built for India by Rome, Berlin and Tokio we can speak in a loud voice to tell India that at least we are looking forward and that we will go on looking forward. Our voice could be stronger than the voices of our enemies because we could offer India and the colonies something better than our enemies can. We could offer them a change of heart.

## MORE SCHOOL FILMS

OLIVER BELL, Director of the British Film Institute, discusses the future of our visual education sources.

POLITICALLY the Board of Education has been the Cinderella of Government Departments. The Presidency, which should rank as a post of the highest honour and distinction, has been regarded all too often only as a stepping-stone to further advancement. The result has been a continual change of direction at the top, a discontinuous policy and an unwillingness to devote time and money to research. Add to this the fact that most members of Finance Committees of Local Government bodies retard expenditure on education as wanton extravagance and the resulting picture is not something of which to boast.

The present war has released us from many inhibitions, as the continual talk of reconstruction and post-war planning bear witness. In the world of education too, the keen people are considering this sorry scheme of things and talking of how they would remould it nearer to their hearts' desire. Consideration is being given not only to the fundamentals of education and its ultimate purpose but also to the new teaching methods which people would like to see introduced.

In discussing these new methods great emphasis has been placed on visual education. Ever since the Greek philosophers drew their geometrical diagrams in the sand, visual education has had a place in the teaching system but until recently it never got farther than the blackboard or in extreme cases the magic lantern. The invention of the comparatively cool, high-light-output electric lamp has widened the range of this form of teachers' aid enormously. It has made practicable the episode which depends on reflected light and enables pictures, drawings or printed matter to be thrown on the screen. It has also rendered possible the full development of the sub-standard cine-projector, both sound and silent.

The teaching film has only come into its own, in fact, during the last decade and it is still less since, with the foundation of the British Film Institute, it was possible to focus opinion on to the principles which underlie instruction by film and suggest ways and means of overcoming the difficulties that emerged with the development of this new form of education. How useful an instrument the film had become even before the autumn of 1939 can be gauged by the fact that relatively less ground has been lost in this educational field than in any other. That is not to say, however, that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

The amount of apparatus in the schools of the United Kingdom (excluding Northern Ireland where there is none) is trifling com-

pared with the U.S.A. or the Axis countries. There are fewer than 3,000 16-mm. projectors in operation, and in the schools of England only about 2,000, of which 1,350 are silent, and 450 sound machines. This is not a great number considering that there are over 30,000 schools. This paucity is one of the difficult factors in the situation. With such a limited market it is not really a commercial proposition to make special teaching films. The supply to the schools has therefore in large degree been derived from advertising or semi-advertising sources. Where the films were specially designed for schools, notably in the now defunct Kodak Library or the G.B. and E.G.S. libraries, they were mainly an adjunct to the sale of equipment against the profits from which their renting losses were offset. This situation reacted unfavourably on the teaching world who could not see why they should spend precious money when the supply was so small.

The breaking of this vicious circle lies at the root of all post-war plans. Its solution is simply a matter of capital. Can the Local Education Authorities and the Board of Education, that is to say, the ratepayers and the taxpayers, both of whom contribute to local education, in the midst of all their other problems of rebuilding schools, reconditioning schools, installing electricity, proper sanitation and the rest, be persuaded to find say £1,500,000, spread over ten years, for this purpose? All of us who are interested in films whether we be administrators, film makers, or teachers hope that the answer will be Yes! It is not a great deal to ask if you believe, as we believe, that whatever other economies in national expenditure are effected after the war, that on education with all it implies as a long term national policy shall be maintained and expanded. Cruel though it may sound I would even be prepared to economise on old-age and other pensions in order to give the people of the future a better chance.

Supposing we carry the day for education, in terms of the visual aspect of the subject, what then? As I see it we must be prepared for a little more centralisation. The present system of complete decentralisation has much to commend it in that it gives the greatest scope to individual initiative. But it also has the disadvantages of small scale operations, the inertia of getting a large number of autonomous bodies on the move, in overlapping and waste of effort. Nowhere is the need for centralisation more evident than in dealing with relatively expensive apparatus like film projectors and relatively expensive supplies like teaching films. The

capital cost of which is high. I see, therefore a system developing based on regional organisation much as the M.O.I. and other Government Departments are working today. I advocate the establishment of regional film libraries and film groups whose work would be co-ordinated by a central institute and library.

The experience of the Scottish Regional Film Library which was set up three years ago, thanks to a £5,000 grant from the Carnegie Trustees, and is now sending out 4,000 reels a month on a basis of hire, leads one to believe that the scheme is feasible. The creation of such regional libraries does not preclude the existence of local film libraries such as exist in several of the richer areas in Scotland to-day. But it is only the richer areas which can maintain their own libraries, and so the regional affair would supplement their requirements and provide a full service to those Authorities which had no library of their own. Similarly the central library would supplement the needs of the regional libraries in the same way as, for books, the National Central Library supplements the activities of local or county libraries.

These regional organisations would also provide an opportunity for pooled buying of apparatus, for a common maintenance service and so forth.

So far this is simply an administrative solution of a general problem. What is far more important to my mind is the Teachers' Film Group. Past experience in this country and in Scotland, where the Scottish Educational Film Association is a most flourishing concern, shows their value in maintaining interest in the subject; for exchanging ideas, previewing films, organising refresher courses on manipulation and teaching method, and, last but by no means least, for research and making known teachers' wants. This form of organisation should be encouraged and developed. And I conceive it to be a function of the British Film Institute, as an unofficial body in a central position, to undertake this development by enlarging and strengthening its educational side so as to make it a separate department of its work.

Thus I suggest the work and functions of a central institute might be:

- (a) To be a clearing house for the data obtained by the local bodies regarding technical and pedagogic problems.
- (b) To carry out research regarding such problems.
- (c) To act as an information bureau on all relevant matters.
- (d) To publish a consolidated catalogue evaluating all existing films and other projection material.
- (e) To act as an advisory body regarding the production of new films, etc.
- (f) To organise exhibitions, conferences and so forth and to assist local bodies in carrying out similar activities.

It is through the activities of existing film groups focused in this manner that we have already worked out the broad aspects of

teaching technique with various types of apparatus and are beginning to appreciate the relative values of the sound and the silent film for different age-groups and for different types of instruction, always bearing in mind that the film does not supersede the teacher. It provides him with a convenient instrument for increasing his own powers of instruction and exposition.

Recently the Scottish Educational Film Association published a report at Is. on the General Principles governing the Production of Educational Films. I commend it to the notice of all film-makers interested in the development of the film for teaching purposes. It is obviously not the last word on the subject but it serves to show where the mind of the teaching world is moving. It is interesting to note the number of subjects in which film can play a part. The Report enumerates English, History, Civics, Geography, Languages, Science, Biology, Botany Physical Education and Hygiene. It does not state the relative importance of each of these subjects in the curriculum. It seems safe to assume, however (just as the Documentary movement has assumed since its inception),

that the teaching of Civics will play an ever more important part in the general objects of education. It is the subject which has perhaps been most lacking from our curriculum in the past. Its need is shown by the demand for lectures in the Forces on current political problems; by the establishment of an Army Bureau of Current Affairs with regular lectures in training time; by the reception which has been accorded by ordinary adults to the pre-war and more recent M.O.I. films of a "documentary" character.

The teachers then have already made some of their wants known but in the days after the war there must be a more organised system whereby the teacher, the film maker and the general public are brought into contact to learn each other's point of view and to provide a stimulus to new developments. In the central institution which I advocate, I see the solution. It is here that the makers of documentary films can keep in touch with the currents of opinion in the teaching world. It is here that the teaching world can be advised of the opinions of those with a more general outlook and it is here that a continuing production policy can be evolved.

means the bulk of our population—are to have the incalculable benefit of consistent war indoctrination from the screen, then the giant resources available to provide it had better be utilised quickly. Now is no time for committees to be complacently pondering whether morale films are to be distributed free or on a rental basis, whether the Government is to pay for prints or the industry is to assume that cost. Now is no time for illusions about "Business as usual" in this line. Either the motion picture industry—meaning theatre operators quite as well as producers—must acknowledge and assume a national service at some probable financial sacrifice or it must stand in the futile position of letting "I dare not" wait upon "I will". A clamouring public, we might add, could have a lot to do with calling the tune.

Of course, when we speak of morale films we have particular reference to "shorts"—one and two reel documentaries, information and inspirational films—which experience has proved are most effective in stimulating a thoughtful response. We do not mean fiction features, which are, in general, another breed of cat, but which do have, of course, considerable influence on the public's emotional whims.

And it just so happens that the industry has already turned out on its own account—and released through its own competitive channels for the usual considerations—a number of commendable "short subjects" which might serve as worthy specimens of morale films. There are the two initial releases in United Artists' World-in-Action Series—the films called *Churchill's Island* and *Battle for Oil*, made by Stuart Legg for the National Film Board of Canada—and as fine examples of intelligent persuasion and dramatic punch as you will see. There was that very good Metro two-reeler, *Main Street on the March*, which won an Academy "Oscar", and another pat one, *Don't Talk*, not yet released, which graphically illustrates the danger of letting vital information slip. There have been several highly pertinent topics explored by the March of Time within the past year, among which particular attention, for purposes of reference, should be called to *When Air Raids Strike*, and *Twentieth Century-Fox* and the Warners, in a purely inspirational vein, have made some interesting pictures of our various armed services in action.

Unquestionably, our motion picture industry is thoroughly competent to produce and distribute morale films of variety and excellence. But it must have a co-operative organisation and supervision as to policy before it can undertake a programme of, say, fifty-two films a year. And, regarding that matter of policy, it is obvious that the time has now come when the public stands in need of some enlightenment along broad, strategic lines. More than a simple illustration of an assembly line for bombers or tanks, our fact films must next show the people the ways in which these instruments are used, the complicated problems of transporting them to the fronts where they are in demand, the vital necessity for getting them there in the shortest possible time. The man in the street is beginning to see this war on a geo-political map. That is a fact which film producers should not henceforth overlook.

And so, in the hope and confidence which we have steadfastly held all along, this column is restively waiting for a programme to be laid out. Maybe a jolt is needed to throw the machinery into gear. But sooner or later it will happen. We'd hate to think otherwise.

## U.S.A. FILM NEEDS

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

Reprinted by courtesy of the *New York Times*

TWO MONTHS ago this column gave voice to some hopeful remarks about the mobilisation of movies as a factor toward creating war morale. One month ago we yammered that no apparent progress had been made. And now, for a third time, we are asking—with a rumble of impatience creeping in—why our great motion picture industry has not been more rapidly enrolled to help get across to the public the facts and deep significance of this war.

Granted that motion pictures are not the only medium of communication not yet geared. Granted, as Edward L. Bernays, the eminent publicist, observed in a recent *Saturday Review*, that we still "are not using the modern weapons of total psychological warfare to fight a modern total war". And granted, as Mr. Bernays further put it, that "a variety of propaganda films at work, only loosely tied together, each calling vague signals to the other—when there should be the grand strategy and the grand approach". There still is no moral reason which historians will later respect why a medium as vast and potential as motion pictures should not have been coupled by now to a programme of national persuasion in this time of our country's direst need.

When we speak of persuasion we do not remotely suggest that films should be used as a bludgeon to beat dogmas into the people's heads. We mean that they should be fashioned according to a thoughtful and orderly plan to convey to the public information of both a general and specific nature—information which would not only help the people to prepare and adapt themselves to wartime circumstances, but would give them a vital awareness of the scope of this grave thing we are up against. Such clear and sober comprehension is essential to psychological stability in a democracy.

Yet it is vaguely possible that our Government has been reluctant to initiate a carefully patterned programme of motion pictures designed to coalesce morale because it might fear that such a programme would smack of a totalitarian will. At least that is a generous explanation for the failure of Lowell Mellett, the Government's present film co-ordinator, to authorise any more than a few Government agency films and certainly nothing that resembles a comprehensive programme. (The fact that the British Ministry of Information has been using films intensively for two years is an incidental rebuttal.) And so it seems distressingly obvious, with more than three months gone by, that if this country is to have a steady, intelligent flow of morale films, then it is up to the established industry to get together and turn them out. Anyhow, it should start the ball rolling against the time when the Government might decide to supervise.

To the manifest credit of the producers, it must be said that they are ready to do their share. The War Activities Committee of the "Hays office," with Francis Harmon at its head, has been giving Mr. Mellett and the Government an abundance of invaluable aid not only in releasing such pictures as the Government agencies (and the industry itself) have already turned out, but in making theatres and artists available for bond sales, book collections and such. And Mr. Harmon and his aides have been exploring, with caution and due regard for trade quagmires, the chances for a practical programme of morale films, with the industry doing the job.

But the clocks are inexorably ticking, the leaves are falling from the calendar one by one, and the Nazis and the Japs are not waiting for the industry—or any one—to form a plan. If the millions of movie-goers in this country—and that



# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Teeth of Steel.** Technique Films for British Council. *Director:* Ronald H. Riley. *Producer:* James Carr. *Cameraman:* Geoffrey Unsworth. *Script:* Max Munden. 10 minutes.

*Subject:* There is no story as such, the film consisting of a series of shots showing modern excavators at work. Giant power-driven shovels are seen cutting canals, draining swamps, carving out railroads, extracting ore from the earth.

*Treatment:* Not for long have we seen a film so infatuated with the worship of the machine for itself. The director was apparently so overcome with the monstrous size and power of his excavators that he concluded they worked themselves without any human agency.

Apart from a symbolic opening close-up of a labourer, there are no people in the film at all. This, though hard to believe, is literally true. There is only a monotonous repetition of different types of machines in long-shot, mid-shot and close-up. The skill of the men who operate these giants finds no place whatever.

The film is shot throughout in Technicolor. Some of the colour is pleasant, particularly a sequence in an iron foundry (even this is shot without a human being in sight). There is also a weighty musical score that attempts valiantly to infuse some excitement into the footage.

It is difficult to understand how a subject that obviously possesses a fine dramatic quality could have been approached in such a dull and inhuman manner.

*Propaganda Value:* It is hardly likely that in this day and age there is much propaganda value in showing a succession of big machines, even in glorious Technicolor. *Teeth of Steel* is such a throw-back to the premodern era that one feels slightly mystified as to why it was made at all. It is rather like an elegant and more costly item from a very old issue of the *Ideal Cine-Magazine*, decked out with all modern accessories.

If the last ten years has not taught us that the machine means little without the people who make it and the people who work it, with all the skill, craftsmanship and work tradition that goes into both, then we seem to have been wasting our time.

**A Way to Plough.** Verity Films. *Production:* James Carr and Sidney Box. *Direction and Camera:* Clifford Hornby. *Technical Adviser:* S. J. Wright. *Editing:* John Durst. *Commentation:* Fred Grisewood. 15 minutes.

*Subject:* A group of Land Girls are taught the correct method of ploughing a field. It is a scientific job and, for the beginner, full of pitfalls. The girls are taught by one of their colleagues, already proficient, and the right and wrong ways of setting about it are clearly shown.

*Treatment:* As in all the Ministry of Agriculture films, the treatment is extremely simple and lucid. Here, the actual shots of the tractor as it ploughs the field are supplemented by diagrams which demonstrate very effectively the course to be pursued. Photography and commentary are well up to standard, and the girls, both the green-horns and the expert, are pleasant people who really look as if they are trying to learn the job.

*Instructional Value:* As an aid to training, excellent. On subjects such as this a film is worth far more than its weight in text-books.

**March of Time No. 10.** Seventh Year. *The Argentine Question.* 20 minutes.

*Subject:* The film endeavours to survey the economic resources, social structure and political course of the important South American Republic. Economically she is not self-supporting, lacking coal, iron and other vital minerals. Because of this she is dependent on the U.S.A. for armaments. The country has always lived on her exports, particularly beef and grain, and although the war has cut off most of this trade, Argentina feels more bound to Europe than the U.S.A.

Popular feeling is overwhelmingly anti-Nazi. Large scale Fifth Column Axis-inspired activity has been discovered, but the Government in a desperate desire to remain neutral refuses to break relations with the Axis Powers.

*Treatment:* There is a complete lack of unity between the visuals and the commentary. It looks as if a cameraman was given a roving commission to shoot everything he could find without working to any plan or prepared script. The commentary goes on and on, and half the time the visuals bear no conceivable relation to what is being said. Neither is there any attempt at a deep social analysis of the country. For instance, there is a naive remark to the effect that Argentina is one of the few South American nations that has a large middle-class public—"the kind of men and women . . . who in every country are the backbone of democracy."

*Propaganda Value:* Despite its faults, the film will have a certain informative interest for audiences unfamiliar with Argentina as anything but a country vaguely situated somewhere in South America. The sequences of her modern cities, her factories, wharves and docks build up a strong impression of a busy, modern industrialised country and it is easy to understand the importance of Argentina as a potential jumping-off ground for an Axis offensive designed firstly to gain complete control of the South American continent, and secondly, as a basis for intimidation of the U.S.A.

**Diary of a Polish Airman.** *Production:* Concanen Films in collaboration with the Polish Ministry of Information and the Polish Air Force. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

*Subject:* The adventures of a Polish airman, who escaped from Poland and fought in France, came to Britain and was finally killed in an air battle.

*Treatment:* The story of the film is told by the dead airman's diary as his brother officers turn over its pages. This is an effective way of doing it and the film itself is quite well and simply made and makes quite an impression of sincerity. It contains a good deal of library material, including some so far unpublished shots of Warsaw, and most of the rest is nicely shot in sympathetic close-up.

*Propaganda Value:* The film should help by giving a sympathetic presentation of the Polish Government's war effort and it succeeds in making their hate of Hitler very real. What is, however, not quite so happy is the picture which many will find a little difficult to appreciate of a type of person who carries on a vendetta sort of fight from one country to another. The fight of Poland itself is another and more thrilling story, but we can hardly expect a film about that just yet.

**Builders.** *Production:* Crown Film Unit. *Direction:* Pat Jackson. *Camera:* Pennington-Richards. *Editor:* Francis Cockburn. *Commentary:* John Hilton. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

*Subject:* The place of builders in the war effort. *Treatment:* The camera and commentator go down to a war factory in process of erection and interview three typical workers there: a bricklayer, a navy and a crane-driver. They are extremely lively lads, especially Charlie, the bricklayer, though George, the navy, with his perpetual moan runs him pretty close. They feel that laying bricks and so on puts them a bit outside the war effort, but the commentator proves to them that their job is very important. They finish by a bit of optimistically vague discussion on the possible future of England after the war, but the quality of the film stands or falls by the personality of Charlie and he is extremely good. It is a real treat to hear a sound-track of working-men talking with a feeling of independence.

*Propaganda Value:* The film should be of great help as a pat on the back and bit of general encouragement to anybody doing any sort of building job and the general public will get a kick out of the vitality of the whole concern. There is just one thing wrong; the men in question, though very lively, do give the impression of being "tame" in the same sense that conservative party candidates used to exhibit "tame" working-men on their platforms. Hard as it tries, the film does give the impression that anything the future holds for these men and their mates is

## CAVALCANTI'S FILM and REALITY

(Length 9,400 ft.)

(Cert. U)

a critical and historical survey of realist films of all countries from 1896 to 1939, produced for the National Film Library, is now available for hire to film societies and for educational use.

*Commentated by Emmett*

*For terms apply to:*

National Film Library, British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

going to be provided for them from above. Their place and function is to be lively, do their job and support their leaders. This is certainly a possible future for this country, but it is by no means a pleasant one and certainly not one we are fighting Hitler for. The film about the future of the country should tell us not what the working-man would like to have given him, but what he feels he wants badly enough to go and get for himself.

**The Countrywomen.** Production: Seven League Productions. Direction: John Page. Associate Producer: Paul Rotha. M.O.I. 15 minutes.

**Subject:** This film is a fireside chat about country life and the activities of the Women's Institute, past and present, for the benefit of a woman evacuated from the town. The discourse is illustrated by appropriate visual accompaniment. The evacuee is invited to a W.I. meeting at which matters of local and national importance are discussed.

**Treatment:** In spite of an attempt to give a natural and informal setting to this film, the approach to the subject is quite impersonal. The evacuee seems to have very little connection with the film; she is merely the audience listening to the countrywoman's talk on the work of the Institute, and occasionally she asks questions. The visual aspect of the film, often very beautifully photographed, illustrates the commentary, but in itself is rather meaningless and disjointed. We are told there is a communal allotment in the village; all we see are several different types of women apparently doing some gardening. Miscellaneous shots of a village shop, a bus, a telephone box, evacuee children having tea and so on, are held together by the slender threads of the conversation between the two women. We see no more of the life of the women in the village than would be observed by a casual visitor: it is not only rather superficial but is inclined to be patronising, and disappointing to one who has known and lived among country people.

**Propaganda value:** As an instructional film on the activities of Women's Institutes it is reasonably adequate; but if it had given the town-dweller a real understanding of country people, their difficulties and the social importance of their community life, it would have contributed to that finer type of propaganda which presents the democratic institutions of this country from the point of view of human values.

**For Children Only.** M.O.I. for Ministry of Food. Production: Strand Film Co. Producer: Alexander Shaw. Direction: John Eldridge. Camera: Charles Marlborough. Non-theatrical. 9 minutes.

**Subject:** This film introduces mothers to a scheme for providing children with fruit juices and cod-liver oil and shows them how these things can be obtained.

**Treatment:** It points out that in wartime when the usual foodstuffs are restricted children must be given something to make up for the deficiency. It is for this reason that the Government has allowed valuable shipping space to be taken up in bringing cod-liver oil from Iceland and fruit juices from America. Mothers are told that their children must have one or other of these concentrated foods to get the right amount of vita-

mins. The film goes on to say that it is a mother's duty to take advantage of this new scheme not only because of the trouble that has been taken to make it possible but to assure the good health of her children. Films made for the sole purpose of giving information such as this are always in danger of becoming boring. But *For Children* Only somehow manages to avoid this by introducing a central character—a mother, who makes use of the Government's offer, and thus gives the film a slight personal interest.

**Propaganda value:** This film is a good example of how films could be used for making important announcements. It gives the facts in a clear and interesting form and would make an excellent starting off point for a lecture or discussion on the subject. Should not such a film as this be available also for theatrical distribution?

**Filling the Gap.** Production: Realist Film Unit. Cartoon: Halas-Batchelor. Music: Ernst Meyer. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** An appeal for us all to grow our own vegetables, in order to leave farming land free for crops.

**Treatment.** Animated diagram and cartoon meet in this film on common ground. The result is pleasing, for the treatment is simple and imaginative. By adopting the cartoon's flexibility and some hint of its inconsequent gaiety in their diagram sequences, and by retaining something of the diagram's essential simplicity in their pure cartoon sequences, the makers have achieved a lively and entertaining film. In details, however, it falls below the high standard it sets itself. One of the early sequences lacks clarity: the play with the three categories of food leaves the audience in doubt. And there is an unpleasant change of style at the end in the drawing of a gathering of vegetables: it smacks of advertisements for Heinz 57 varieties. One discounts the roughness of the purely mechanical work—the excessive outline wobble, the evidence of celluloid buckle, the unsteady camerawork—as being due to the limitations of time and cost.

It is, perhaps, inevitable to compare any cartoon form with Disney's work, which is neither fair to Disney nor to the cartoonist; for time and cost play a decisive part in the execution of cartoon ideas. But there is one factor common to the making of all cartoons, and that is the film sense behind the execution. This, and not necessarily his million pound equipment and his hundreds of personnel, gives Disney his place in cartoon. His films, in the main, are gems of imaginative construction. It is just this film sense which *Filling the Gap* lacks to some extent. There are awkward transitions and odd uses of screen space. However, altogether it is an enterprising film, to which Ernst Meyer's abstract music contributes an adequate, if uninspired sound track in company with the easy, straightforward commentary.

**Propaganda value.** A film such as this will probably command more attention in the cinema than most. Its simple message, therefore, stands a good chance of going home. It is unfortunate that the sponsors have seen fit to end the film with an ugly title describing the urgency of the problem (surely a tacit admission that they don't believe in the propaganda value of the film). Its only effect is to make what one has just seen appear quite trivial.

**Via Imperial.** Production: Strand Films. Direction: Desmond Dickenson.

**Story:** The growth of cables and wireless. The British Empire's need for rapid communication. Coming up to date with war communications, official and personal.

**Treatment:** Starting off with the development of communications, *Via Imperial* works up through reconstructed sequences—such as the first murderer to be arrested by a telegraph message beating the train he was on. The difficulties of laying and maintaining the first Atlantic cable. Queen Victoria exchanging telegrams with President of the United States. Marconi and the first wireless signal across the Atlantic. Modern cables, wireless telegraphy and news picture transmission. There is the whole sequence from the G.B. newsreel of Scott and Black's arrival in Australia. Each frame of film was enlarged and telegraphed to England and the film was in the cinemas the next day.

**Propaganda:** Good straight-forward film. Very good for schools.

## PLUS CA CHANGE

D.N.I. readers may be interested in the following extracts from a periodical of the last war (title unknown), pages of which members of the Editorial Board recently found wrapped round three pennyworth of peanuts.

### A Rapid Conversion

It would be difficult to find a more striking instance of the power of personality and practical work than in the case of the Minister of Information. When Lord Beaverbrook was appointed there was quite an outcry in the Press and the critics in the House of Commons were loud voiced. To-day, on all sides there is nothing but praise for the excellent results of his efforts. Even the enemy has been moved to admiration.

### Keen Interest

Movies are attended by some risks at Jerusalem, where they have been instituted since our occupation of the Holy City. It seems that the natives are quite unable to comprehend that the characters are not present in the flesh. Not only do they cheer the hero and heroine, and groan and growl at the villain, but they even pelt him with stones, sticks and offal, damaging the screen and not infrequently injuring the stage hands.

### The New Taxi Manners

A friend of mine living in Roehampton could not get a taxi to bring her to the Ritz to lunch the other day. In despair she made a sign to a lucky woman who was driving past in one and begged for a lift, and she proved a friend in need, and soon they took up another wayfarer. I am told that it is becoming quite the commonest occurrence for perfect strangers to share taxis nowadays.

### Questions in Parliament

Talking of boxing one cannot help wondering what Lord Londale thinks of the precious Wilde v. Conn match, which has taken a soldier and an artificial limb-maker away from their work to share an enormous purse. Most sportsmen seem to think the whole thing was ill-advised, and there are rumours that questions on the affair will be raised when Parliament next meets.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 4

APRIL 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Centre, New York.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3-50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON  
W.1 GERRARD 4253

## PROPAGANDA OR AESTHETICS?

We publish below a letter from ERNEST LINDGREN, curator of the National Film Library (British Film Institute), on the subject of Basil Wright's review of *Film and Reality* which appeared in D.N.C. for March. Lindgren's letter is followed by a reply from Wright, and the matter is also referred to in "Notes of the Month."

THE EDITOR,  
*Documentary News Letter*,  
34 Soho Square, W.1.  
SIR,

In the generous review which you gave to *Film and Reality*, Basil Wright makes a number of criticisms to which I have no intention of replying in detail. Cavalcanti is fully capable of defending his own work, if he feels any defence is necessary. If, as Wright concedes, the film is stimulating, then from our point of view it is a success. If opinion differs as to its composition and conclusions, this is simply because we are dealing with a very live subject and not with some academic corpse.

I may perhaps be permitted to comment on two points of fact. Firstly, Wright complains that in dealing with British documentary Cavalcanti has "almost ignored the dynamic use of sound"; in fact, out of a total of six extracts from British documentaries, three are selected to illustrate exactly this, as the commentary in each case makes clear. Secondly, we are told: "there is one other omission, and that is the analytic film dealing with mechanical or scientific processes"; in fact, this *genre* is represented by examples from the work of Charles Urban, Bruce Woolfe, Mary Field and Percy Smith, Dr. R. G. Cant, Dr. Russell Reynolds and Jean Painlevé—six examples in all. Extracts from *Aero-Engine*, *Transfer of Power*, and the like were omitted because their success depends largely on a clever use of animated diagrams, and we did not regard diagrams as falling within our already vast province.

Really, however, what I wish to comment on are the larger issues raised in Wright's article, and especially those which go deep down into the future of the documentary movement. It is plain that Wright's main quarrel with Cavalcanti arises from the latter's alleged underestimation of the sociological importance of modern (especially British) documentary, and overestimation of film technique, which is belittlingly called "mere aesthetics". Again and again in his review Wright reveals this contempt for technique which, under Grierson's influence, has permeated all the critical writing of the British school in recent years.

To me it seems that this view is thoroughly pernicious and rests on an entirely false distinction. It is a widespread heresy, not confined to the film world, that what one says and how one says it, are two different things. Professor Joad in a recent Brains' Trust session argued that Shakespeare's line, "Come away, come away, death," etc., contained exactly the same thought as "My girl has jilted me and I want to die", although the second was commonplace and the first so lovely that it sent shivers down his spine. To me this is nonsense. Art is the communication of experience. These two quotations give expression to entirely different levels of experience, and so say entirely different things. When Joad equates them, he merely reduces them both to the lowest common denominator. But once you do that to Shakespeare's lines, you have

destroyed, not merely their form, but their content. In any work of art, the content lies in the form. This appears to me the most elementary axiom of art criticism.

It is the failure to appreciate this axiom which leads Wright to make such confused and even self-contradictory statements as (1) "The various early experiments in sound were important not merely from the aesthetic point of view, but because they were designed to strengthen and classify the social angle." (2) British documentary films tended to "sacrifice purely aesthetic considerations to the need for pungent comment and the imaginative presentation of facts and problems".

The realist film, says Wright in his programme for the future, must "devote itself to the urgencies of the moment with the same dynamic emphasis which marked the revolutionary period of the Soviet film." But were the highest achievements of the Soviet cinema attained by labelling technique as "mere aesthetics" and despising it? On the contrary, as we all know, they devoted the greatest attention to purely technical experiments and the working out of a sound critical theory, laying the foundations for all subsequent film criticism. Eisenstein's preoccupation with "mere aesthetics" is far greater than Cavalcanti's has ever been. Pudovkin similarly.

There is a theory that technique can be left to look after itself if only one is sincere and has something really vital to say. I cannot believe that such a fine craftsman as Wright is not aware how nonsensical this is. In the National Film Library Loan Section we have two films, both made in Germany at the same time on the same theme: *Kameradschaft* and *War is Hell*. Was Pabst really sincere? Recent rumour tends to deny it. But to-day *Kameradschaft* is still as vital an utterance as ever, while *War is Hell* has already become a museum curiosity. To-day it is still a real joy to watch *Night Mail*, with its superb cutting and imaginative use of sound, while many other documentaries it would be unkind to name, with messages no less sincere or important, are mercifully consigned to limbo.

I hope by the way that no one will construe me to be championing mere technical virtuosity, which simply represents the opposite extreme of this same heresy that one can in practice separate thought and expression, form and content.

I have the greatest sympathy with the sociological aims of the British documentary movement. When Wright says, "I believe absolutely that the revolutionary technique is the only technique," he sounds a resounding bugle call for the future. I devoutly hope that British documentary may keep its ideals unattained, for it is one weapon we possess against the lowering threat of coming disillusion. But if that weapon is not to fail in our hand, those on whose work it depends must get rid of these silly notions that technique doesn't matter and can be dismissed as "mere aesthetics".

I believe that Harry Watt, in his recent letter to the *New Statesman*, has given the fairest comment on the whole business. "It was Grierson's

drive and initiative that obtained the formation of the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit... it was the introduction of Cavalcanti's professional skill and incredible film sense that raised the standard and reputation of British documentary."

I sympathise with the ideals of British documentary, and there are occasions when the duty of a friend is to speak bluntly. One of its worst enemies is its own narrow parochialism which occasionally borders on intolerance. It is all too easy for the fervent propagandist to see little good in other causes and no fault in his own. (Hence, perhaps, the curious blindness which leads Wright to describe our omission of *Aero-Engine* or *Transfer of Power* as an omission of the analytic film in general.)

It is perhaps because of this (or perhaps it is merely an accident) that in a six-column review of *Film and Reality* no mention is made of the British Film Institute or the National Film Library which produced the film and whose pioneer work in collecting and preserving early films made its production possible. I mention this, not from personal disappointment, but because it hinges on to this matter of technique. *Film and Reality* was made for the National Film Library's Loan Section whose object is to encourage film appreciation, and provide material for its study. I happen to believe in the future and the value of film appreciation as enthusiastically as Basil Wright believes in documentary.

Those of us in the film world who are idealists look on British documentary as a pretty big thing because it promises so much to our hopes. But when we get away from the charmed air of Soho Square and talk to ordinary film-goers in suburbs and provinces, and see the programmes they see, we are reminded that documentaries are still a mere droplet in the ocean of film production which floods the screens of the world. How is documentary to carry its message in the face of such rivalry?

Surely the only solution lies in an enlightened public opinion. The cinema is the greatest popular art of our time. In the cinema he who does not satisfy millions will quickly be forced to use his talents elsewhere. This throws a heavy burden of responsibility for its future development on the cinema audience itself. If the possibilities of the cinema are to be realised and used to the greatest social good, audiences must become far more knowledgeable and critical. As Hitchcock said somewhere, the director can only go as far as his audience will let him.

Fortunately the task is not a difficult one. People, especially young people, are astonishingly eager to learn. The film industry itself, with its curious notion that knowledge will destroy the cinema's illusion, and with its *ersatz* diet of fairy tales for film fans, is much to blame for the fact that they have not already learnt far more.

We believe that in tackling the problem of film appreciation we are tackling one of the major problems of our time, namely the relation of cinema to society. An audience critically alive will no longer be at the mercy of every smart Alick who can turn out a nicely-lit picture and a well-recorded track. And in particular, (although our concern, of course, is with the whole of the cinema, and not merely with one part of it), such an audience will readily respond to the best documentary movement can give it; and by that I mean technically the best. The result will not only be a demand for good documentaries, but also their showing will achieve, as it already does

for the intelligent film-goer, an importance out of all relation to their footage.

I believe, in short, that the roads pursued by British documentary and by the National Film Library in its film appreciation work (and, one might add, by the A.C.T., which has become a most valuable forum where technicians themselves can exchange ideas and experience) can and should lie in the same direction. Discriminating audiences will demand good films; good films will help to train discriminating audiences. It is in this faith that we made *Film and Reality*. It is in this faith that I earnestly hope that British documentary, before it is too late, will reverse its basic thesis to: "We are film-makers first and propagandists second." Otherwise I can see little hope for the success of their propaganda.

Yours faithfully,

ERNEST H. LINDGREN,

Curator, National Film Library,  
British Film Institute.

## WRIGHT'S REPLY

SIR,

There are one or two points in Lindgren's letter which call for a reply.

Firstly, there is the alleged "contempt for technique" which Lindgren claims has permeated all the critical writing of the British school in recent years. How Lindgren arrived at this conclusion is a mystery to me, though it may partly be due to the confusion between "technique" and "aesthetics" which is such a marked feature of his letter.

I repeat unrepentantly the phrase "mere aesthetics". Nothing, to my mind, could be worse than an approach to any art form which is self-consciously concerned merely with aesthetic considerations. Such an approach is not the job of the critic; still less so is it the job of the documentary film maker.

The following points are not personal opinion, but fact:—

1. "We are propagandists first and film makers second" has been the basis of the documentary movement since its inception in 1929. Curiously enough this phrase does not mean that we are uninterested in film making.
2. Documentary, under the direct leadership of John Grierson, has, despite this "deleterious" motto, done more experiment with the film form than any other group in this country.
3. These experiments arose from a desire to use the film as a sociological medium, and the aesthetics of documentary arose from such a desire. Technically we needed to explore and exploit all the possibilities of the film. Creatively we needed to put our message across as a living entity to our audiences. Hence another "unfortunate" slogan—"The creative interpretation of reality".

These points I should have thought Lindgren, with his very wide and acute knowledge of the whole world of film, would have been the first to understand. But instead he tries to find contradictions in two statements in my article.

The first, which incidentally he misquotes, is as follows: "The various early experiments in sound were important not merely from the aesthetic point of view, but because they were designed to strengthen and clarify (not "classify" as Lindgren quotes me) the social angle." In other words we

weren't trying merely to make beautiful noises, we were trying to say something important.

The second statement, which is alleged to contradict the first, is that documentary tended "to sacrifice purely aesthetic considerations to the need for pungent comment and the imaginative presentation of facts and problems". This has been true of a number of very important documentaries. It is true of *Housing Problems*, *The Nutrition Film* and *Children at School*, for instance. Yet curiously enough, *Housing Problems* especially in its final sequence, has to me at least had a considerable "aesthetic" impact on all of the many occasions on which I have seen it. And what about that super-example of the unaesthetic subject, *Target for Tonight*?

I think Lindgren has muddled his argument by identifying "technique" with "aesthetics". The words are not interchangeable.

That Lindgren agrees on the point that to-day "The revolutionary technique is the only technique" naturally delights me, but when in the same breath he accuses us of "silly notions that technique doesn't matter" I am completely bewildered. No one in documentary has ever to my knowledge said or written anything of the sort. Such an idea is certainly not to be found in my article. As I have already pointed out, constant experiments in technique have always been, and will continue to be, one of the most marked features of documentary film making.

Now we come to the second major point to which a reply is necessary. I was indeed astonished to find that Lindgren was in agreement with an extraordinary letter which appeared recently in the *New Statesman*.

Grierson, like all great men, is well able to ignore attacks made on him from whatever

FOR YOUR  
**TITLES**  
ANIMATED DIAGRAMMS  
OPTICAL EFFECTS  
AND  
Precision Processing  
WITH A  
Prompt Service

**STUDIO FILM  
LABORATORIES LTD.**

71 DEAN ST., W.1

Telephone—Gerrard 1365-6-7



(Continued from previous page)

negatives. But in the interests of accuracy, and also because I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of documentary workers as a whole, I must point out that Grierson has always been and still is a remarkable technician, a magnificent teacher, and, in short, a great producer. To suggest that his "drive and initiative . . . obtained the formation of the E.M.B. Film Unit", but that his influence was then superseded by that of Cavalcanti (who joined us in 1934, five years after the E.M.B. Unit had been formed), is a statement which must have astonished Cavalcanti as much as it astonishes anyone who knows anything of the British documentary movement.

I owe far too much to Cavalcanti to give the impression that I wish to belittle in any way the enormous contribution he made to documentary during the period in which he was working with us. Indeed, that Grierson invited him to join us is an excellent example of Grierson's deep understanding of the needs of documentary as regards the development of treatment and technique under an experienced and exceptionally talented teacher.

Grierson is not merely the founder of the documentary movement. Since its inception it has been his own understanding of film technique, his encouragement of experimentation and (to meet Lindgren on his own ground) his uncanny grasp and knowledge of aesthetics as regards art in general and film art in particular, which have been the driving force and inspiration of the progress of documentary.

These qualities, out of deference to Lindgren, I have put first, but I must now add Grierson's political grasp and foresight, his incredible energy and organisational drive, and, above all, his unswerving loyalty not merely to the idea of documentary but also to all those working with him.

I am sorry to have to recite this factual ABC, which will be so familiar to all unbiased readers of D.N.L., who know anything about the Documentary Movement, but when a man of Lindgren's standing closes his eyes to simple facts, it is necessary to try and open them again. I am doubly sorry for the attack on Grierson since it is unfair to Cavalcanti, who worked so well and so fruitfully with us all under Grierson's leadership, and whose latest film, *The Foreman Went to France*, is so distinguished by its realist technique, its excellent propaganda message, and its cinematic integrity.

I am in entire agreement with Lindgren's feelings as regards film appreciation, and, in common I am sure with all documentary workers, will welcome all and any efforts by him and his colleagues at the Film Institute to tackle "the relation of cinema to society".

I am sure, however, he will forgive us if we don't take his advice about aesthetics.

We are to-day all of us engaged in the urgencies of war. Much of our work must perforce be devoted to short-term messages; but the various productions by documentary people in all sorts of units are sufficient evidence that documentary's basic purposes still hold good and hold firm.

I am not interested in parochial squabbles any more than Grierson is; nor do I think any good purpose can be served by discussing this matter further, now that the facts of the case have been restated.

Yours, etc.,

BASIL WRIGHT.

## FILM OF THE MONTH

### THE FOREMAN WENT TO FRANCE

IT WAS a very hot Sunday afternoon and you would have thought that after the long winter people would have wanted to get out in the sun and warm air and see the Spring. As we walked up Piccadilly and the Circus came in sight, we could see the queue. "Damn all these people going into stuffy cinemas when they should be out in the healthy fresh air".

Inside it was nearly full and warming up. Half-past three, twenty to four, and the stalls started clapping. Looking round you see old Ansted sitting in the row behind—he seems to be nodding off. He suddenly looks up and sees you. I suppose all the boys are here waiting to see what Cavalcanti's film's going to be like. More clapping, and on comes the five minuter, *The Owner Goes Aloft*. Not one of the best, but everyone is pleased to see something, and it goes down well. Then *Hayflood*, which also goes down very well. James Gleason is good and old Joe Sawyer (who was in the *Informers*) is good too. Then the newsreel—Universal and Mr. Jefferys who I don't like. Then the lights come up.

The curtains open and blue and red lights are thrown on the screen and they run the Rat trailer which is very good, but you can't really see it for the coloured lights. Its really hot and stuffy by now. All the air conditioning schemes seem to have gone wrong since the war started. Maybe it was the bombs. And they are standing down the side gangways. Then on comes *The Foreman Went to France*. Plain black and white titles. Its a wonder the English don't have trade marks like the Americans. Direction Charles Frend—Associate Producer Cavalcanti—just straight Cavalcanti—Script Angus Macphail and Leslie Arliss—couldn't get the third name. Sound, Len Page—he recorded *Housing Problems*. Photography, Wilkie Cooper, and we're off. That's old Bill Blewitt as one of the fire watchers.

After a reminding first sequence, we are back into 1940 and the film itself. All the opening sequences of Clifford Evans trying to break down the stupidity of the factory management and civil service red tape go down very well. The audience seem to know that story by heart. I don't like Clifford Evans very much, he's too sincerely sincere. All the French people are extremely well cast though. I don't like Robert Morley very much either—he's too clever—but he is well directed and toned down. He is the villain so you can dislike him anyway. The first

glimpse of Tommy Trinder and Gordon Jackson is very pleasant. It's nice to see someone being honest.

The film really comes alive. (The attitude towards looting is typical of the whole film.) It is all very honest and very true—and the film is extremely good as propaganda, instruction, and especially morale. No points are laboured, nothing is distorted to make a propaganda point—which is such a common failing with both shorts and features. There is an example at the end of the film when they are trying to persuade a French fishing captain to take the machinery on his already overcrowded boat. The skipper says he doesn't know whether he can manage the machinery. The foreman, having heard that the French are fond of money, pulls out all the money, gives it to the skipper and says, "There'll be more when we get to England"—and the Frenchman just looks at him and says, "I don't want your money". A sequence like this clears anti-French feeling, and, more importantly, it does it honestly. It doesn't just say that there is nothing wrong with the French. It admits that maybe the French are fond of a little money, but it says at the same time that there are plenty of things the French are more interested in than money. It is rather an obscure point, but it is a very important one. In so many films, and often because of the official attitude, everything is either pure white or pure black; and it becomes just silly as far as convincing anyone is concerned.

Once the film has started, it just gets better and better. The various fifth columnists, the beautiful sequences of French children—the audience are just lapping it up. This is the kind of stuff that English audiences have been waiting for for many a year. Tommy Trinder's and Gordon Jackson's dialogue is terrific. Someone using real English dialogue well. I bet it wasn't written by a studio writer—maybe that's unfair, but we have never heard anything as good before. Of course, a lot of credit is due to the directing and acting that puts the lines over—but you've got to have something to work from.

What more is there to be said? The film is all good from the beginning to the end—it deals honestly and respectfully with people—it puts the dirty dogs in their places. All you can do is to congratulate Cavalcanti, the actors and the technicians, and Michael Balcon, and hope that they will make more films as good as this one.

## TO DOCUMENTARY PRODUCERS

**SELWYN FILM SERVICES, LTD.,**  
have periodically FOR HIRE a surplus of extremely  
**PORTABLE AND EFFICIENT LIGHTING EQUIPMENT**  
for interior location work.

Also CUTTING FACILITIES at 90 WARDOUR ST.

Enquiries to 19 Lexham Mews, W.8. Wes. 1969.

# WOMEN AND PROPAGANDA

By EDITH MANVELL

WHEN war was declared women expected to be called up within a few weeks to take an active part in the war effort. While they were waiting for the machinery of organising the conscription of woman power to be set in motion, many women who felt they could spare several hours a week from their home duties, did voluntary war work, but they regarded this as only a temporary measure. Time passed, the war seemed at a standstill, and the first desire to serve the country for the defence of our homes relaxed into passivity.

Eventually the call came—a million volunteers were needed. At last the moment had come for action. It was not quite what was expected, women were not conscripted, they were merely asked to volunteer. No one quite knew what to do. They waited for orders. Nothing seemed to happen, they just had to go on waiting. What irritated people was that after being asked by the Government to volunteer for war work, they were so often told there was nothing they could do. A woman who offered to do part-time work was told, when she arrived at the factory, that there wasn't a job for her, but if she liked she could sweep the place up a bit. Is it a wonder that they feel humiliated and exclaim angrily, "If they want me, they must come and fetch me next time." Apathy breeds apathy and so the second great opportunity of gaining the willing co-operation of women was lost.

Once more the Government had put the cart before the horse—in fact there probably was no horse. The propaganda was there, but there was no clear national policy, no driving power to action, no organisation to give it effect.

Those women who were conscious of the urgency of total warfare were prepared for strict control and a temporary suspension of personal liberties if it meant greater efficiency. But the Government decided to let us down gently; they tried through their propaganda to coax us into making sacrifices voluntarily, with the obvious result that only conscientious people took any notice. The methods of appealing to our social sense were sometimes strangely perverted. For instance, in our daily papers there was the photograph of a cunning little boy telling his father to put his money into Savings Certificates in order to avoid paying income tax!

Propaganda if it is to be effective must be honest and not resort to tricks or side-tracking from vital issues: any insincerity, patronising or cajoling only provokes resentment or indifference. Women don't expect to be treated like spoiled children. Activity—getting something done—is the only approach which will produce effective results. Often it is woman's practical common sense which cuts through many a tangle of red tape, and male officials have been disconcerted at a woman's complete lack of respect for rules and regulations if they are obsolete or prevent effective action. There are no written laws in the home; each problem is handled as it arises and as circumstances alter a case; so each problem receives the appropriate treatment. That does not mean that every home is well run or free from muddles: however dull the routine may be, there are times when every woman has to use initiative. If this is guided by a shrewd

sense of humour it is certain that all the little trials and troubles in the home will be smoothed away.

It is precisely this element in home life which should be taken into account when directing a policy of propaganda for women—something practical and good humoured. If we consider some of the films which have been made about women or for women we can see the good and bad qualities of our propaganda in practice.

Fortunately the mediocre films are quickly forgotten. The better documentary films often leave a lasting impression, not in details but of the spirit which is the essence of the film. For instance *Land Girl*, which has recently been released, is not specifically intended as a recruiting film to persuade girls to join the land army—it has a more human approach, and what impresses many people is the fact that here is a girl who has given up a town job, who undertakes some of the most arduous work a woman can do, who is actuated not by high falutin patriotic principles but by a real love for the job in hand and a realisation of the need for it to be done; and yet she finds herself up against difficulties, not created by the enemy, but by the prejudices of the people for whom she works. A weaker woman would have packed up and gone home, but here is a girl with grit and faith enough to master the difficulties and by sheer ability overcome the opposition which threatened to make her life hard and wretched. The girl is real to the audience, and she wins admiration and respect for those qualities which are essential whatever the job may be. The woman engineer, the woman in the Forces, the woman who works on transport may be up against this kind of prejudice—it may be the sceptical attitude of men, or the scornful pity of women who say, "You look just awful, my dear, in that ghastly uniform."

The best propaganda films are those which show men and women doing a really fine job and in which the individual triumphs over difficulties and dangers—the sort of films which show women at their best—not thereby implying that all women are angels, but proving by a concrete and genuine example that they can be very efficient, practical and hardworking people if they appreciate the need for the job they are asked to do. Propaganda by example is therefore the most effective.

One of the difficulties which confronts those responsible for propaganda films is to make a universal appeal and avoid the temptation to present a theme from a limited class angle. Most of the films on women up to the present have a middle-class flavour. *W.R.N.S.* is just such a film; it represents the women in this service as rather self-consciously refined young ladies brought up in the best traditions; to a working-class girl certain parts of this film might appear just "silly", and as far as she is concerned, the recruiting value of the film is lost. She knows perfectly well that when she is called up she will have a much tougher job to do, and parading smartly in uniform doesn't seem to have much to do with fighting the enemy.

It might be interesting to contrast two films about women; the one *W.F.S.* and the other made in Russia, *100,000 Women*. As films they

are very simply made, using a newsreel technique—a panorama of activity. In the Russian film the women are for the most part tough, working-class types. Though some of the work they do, as for example the digging of tank traps, requires great physical endurance, it is pointed out in the commentary that most of the work they do requires skill and intelligence rather than strength.

Several times during the film we are made aware of their indomitable courage, as when the parachute nurse jumps from a "plane. The man who is going into the army entrusts the gathering of the harvest to his wife: he is seen teaching her to drive a tractor. She will do the job even though the German army may invade and destroy her farm. Those parts of the film which deal with military and defence services are not represented as parades in uniform but show us the grim determination on the women's faces and the arduous nature of their work. There is nothing smart about the physical appearance of these Russian women; they reserve that quality for efficiency in their job.

Nevertheless there is little in this film which could not be seen happening everywhere in Britain. The working-class women in this country are just as efficient and tough, but they are handicapped by two things—on the one hand there are the prejudices of the men who have never employed woman labour, and the men who are unwilling to teach them their own skilled work; and on the other there is the failure of the Government to supply that kind of propaganda which makes people believe in the urgency of their job. People are not yet quite sure whether they are working for a victory that will take us back to 1939, or whether victory will bring an opportunity for righting the social and economic evils of the past. This is the problem that makes so much of our propaganda ineffectual.

The film *W.F.S.* is an example of the varied nature of the work done voluntarily by women referred to as "Maid of all work in green uniforms". Much of the work is uninspiring but necessary to the war effort, such as collecting salvage, and sorting clothes. The more interesting moments in the film are those which show us the women supplying food to demolition workers and dockers and waiting with ambulances and cars to drive shipwrecked casualties to hospital. And yet this film fails to give anything but the most superficial idea of the part women are taking in the war effort. It is not enough to be shown well-meaning, kindly and industrious women; we want to feel something of the faith which inspires them and the dynamic will to put every ounce of effort into freeing this country from the threat of defeat and slavery. It is once more the official propaganda which is at fault, because it is ineffectual and avoids the really vital issues. When we see the women porters at railway stations, women working on the lines, women as builders' labourers, or working machines which men were quite sure they couldn't manage, we know that the material for films is there, but until those responsible for commissioning such films make up their minds to provide something less refined than we have had up to the present, the real hard work done by women in this country will pass unnoticed.

# WE HAVE OUR TROUBLES TOO!

By MARY LOSEY, noted U.S. Documentary Expert.

AT FIRST glance an invitation to write about U.S. wartime documentary propaganda has the ring of opportunity. But then the eye stops, frozen on a word—"policy". Whose policy? Which policy?

Not long ago we learned from our president that Washington has its Cliveden set, which has a policy. The exponents of defence have a policy. So have exponents of offence. There is a business as usual policy. A business better than usual policy and an all-out policy. There is the timid policy that the public is to be informed "in terms of" facts. How it smacks of all the mimeographed reports stacked end on end, "dictated but not read". There's the policy of sending shorts of South America on subjects that will offend nobody. And there's a policy that decides that some producers of prophetic documentary films are incompetent because they made films attacking fascism before it was nice to be anti-fascist.

Occasionally, too, there is the catch-me-if-you-can policy of a producer who gets loose and makes a picture saying that South American young people are much like North American young people and therefore have a common ground for fighting the Axis. Or others wander off and make a film about nursery camps because they think they are important, especially since we have no plans for the care of young children in this war.

In Washington they have a dozen different policies ranging from the sponsors of *The Land* (not yet released), to the Office of Emergency Management which believes in keeping us informed on the battle of production. The O.E.M. is telling us that we can and are making the necessary instruments of war. And this we are glad to know. The only catch is that after you've said that we can make tanks and we can make bombers, and we have a lot of electric power, then you can go on to say that we also make cannon and ships, but there is an end to it eventually and you come smack up against a rather forgotten commodity—people. One brush of the O.E.M. with this ticklish subject is an unforgettable item called *Women in Defence*. First you get a girl in coveralls pirouetting à la Adelaide Hawley while a commentator tells you that women are going to work in this war, and they are going to dress to fit, and becoming too. Before you quite get your bearings you realise to your horror that Katharine Hepburn, whom you really like quite a lot when she stays on her own side of the railroad tracks, is telling you how our women are doing their bit in industry. As I remember it the pictures here are a repetitious montage of women doing things that it is supposed to be remarkable for women to be doing. You might as well have had the Duchess of Windsor teaching British film audiences the Lambeth Walk.

There are some bright spots which lamentably have nothing whatsoever to do with the U.S. documentary policy. They have to do with the National Film Board of Canada and some of the productions that have reached America from England via the Ministry of Information. Grierson's policy of illuminating the Canadian war effort by relating it to the rest of the world is perhaps not ideally suited to duplication here

since the citizens of these States, like the citizens of Britain, still have the habit of thinking that the rest of the world is related to them. All the same we will get more light from seeing the strategy series from Canada and more realisation of the fact that we are fighting a global war than from any of our own productions. The fact that from henceforth American audiences will have the monthly opportunity to see *The World in Action* is the best news of the moment.

Perhaps it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Hollywood will have taken a lesson from the audiences flocking to *Target for Tonight*. The time is past when Selective Service was just a huge joke on a bunch of guys who used to make fifty bucks a week and now have to work their heads off for twenty-one dollars a month and a sergeant who talks and acts like a Brooklyn Dodger fan. We were pretty pompous a year ago in our judgment of the British product that came our way. "London can take it", we said. "Yeah, but can she dish it out?" I shudder to think what our snooky spectacles of the latest sweater girl singing blues in the officers' mess make of our war effort.

This is not to disparage some notable shorts such as *Eves of the Navy*, *The New Spirit*, with Donald Duck to tell you that all you gotta do is do it, or the easy-to-take friendly advice of a film like *Safeguarding Military Secrets*. But with such notable exceptions and some individual con-

tributions such as those on *Our Russian Front*, you can chalk up Hollywood's contribution to date as a dead loss.

"Some day," says Bob Flaherty, who has discovered quite a bit of America himself these past few years. "Some day we will wake up and discover that it takes more than machines to win this war; it also takes people."

When that day comes it will show in our films. Then our films will recognise that this is no football game but a fight; that we want light,—not cheerleaders. Then films will begin to shed light wherever they can. They may begin with simple geography but however they begin they will teach, relate and lead.

No one can sit down at his typewriter and outline to-day the films that must be made this year or even this month. But that is not a question for policy but for plan. Plan will change from week to week. Policy must be a clear and constant directive. The American people are free men and women who wish to fight to make their freedom lasting and real. Our policy will be to make films which will help them to understand the job before them and to fortify their courage and will to do it.

But that would be propaganda—and when you say that,—smile—no,—giggle.

## "Living Movement" . . .

CARLYLE defined Progress in just those two words! In paying due tribute to the aptness of the sage's definition the Kinematograph Weekly translates the spirit into action. Current events are reported for our readers in relation to the general advance, artistic and technical, by which progress in Kinematography is achieved.

Keep abreast of progress in your craft  
—read the

# Kine<sup>matograph</sup> WEEKLY

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2

# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

The Film Society of Ayrshire reports that the outlook at the beginning of the season was anything but favourable as the theatre in Prestwick was no longer available. Since there was not another suitable theatre in the town, the Council decided to tackle the problem of the eighth season by trying for a theatre in Ayr, four miles distant. The management of the Ritz Cinema, Ayr, appreciated the application for the use of the theatre and the local magistrates gave their approval of our performances. From the beginning the Society has been an unqualified success in Ayr. In Kilmarnock, too, where the same programme is shown in the afternoon, the attendances have been regular, with the result that the Society is approaching the end of its most successful season, having upward of 1,400 members between the two theatres. Perhaps the most gratifying feature to the Council is that well over 2,000 members of the Allied Forces have already availed themselves of Guest Membership. The season opened with Charles Boyer in *Le Bonheur*, on the same programme was *La Joie de Vivre*, which was well received. Among other films shown during the season were *Down Went McGinty*, *The Life of Emile Zola*, *Hoppin and Gross' Fox Hunt*, *Les Disparus de St. Agil*, *The Last Night*, *Kellino's I Met a Murderer*, the Swedish short *Early One Morning*, the Russian documentary *Conquerors of the North*, *Carnet de Bal*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Les Rois du Sport* and *Shors*. The season will conclude with two special programmes, the first on *Hollywood* and the last meeting on the subject of *Crackers*. The feature will be the Marx Brothers' *Night at the Opera*.

The Edinburgh Film Guild ended a remarkably successful season with a special Russian programme with *Shors* as the feature, supported by shorts, including *Russian Salad*. The M.O.I. five-minute *Land Girl* and *Massingham's And So to Work* were also shown. *Claudine* was shown on February 22nd with some interesting shorts, and on March 11th there was a performance of prize-winning amateur films. Membership has increased steadily since the outbreak of war and the pre-war total has almost been reached. The annual meeting will be held in June.

The Manchester and District Film Institute Society and Manchester and Salford Film Society report that in association with the British Council, the Societies presented *Film and Reality* at the Rivoli Cinema on March 22nd. *Machines and Men* and *Guests of Honour* were also shown. Professor R. A. C. Oliver, Head of the Manchester University Department of Education, welcomed Mr. Alberto Cavalcanti as the guest speaker. During the discussion, which lasted an hour, the Secretary raised the question of content and political and social values in cinema, and recalled Cavalcanti's earlier criticism in WORLD FILM NEWS of the *Life of Emile Zola* on these grounds while admitting the film's considerable qualities of realism. In reply, Cavalcanti stressed that in making *Film and Reality*, it had been found convenient to limit the theme more to changes in technique in the realist film. Another member sought an explanation for the lack of realism in the sound track (faked news-reel sound, etc.), and some of the technical diffi-

culties of achieving the same degree of realism as in the visuals at the present stage of sound recording were indicated. This report from the *Manchester Guardian* summarises the remaining part of the discussion: "Answering questions afterwards, Mr. Cavalcanti forecast much greater demand for realist films in the commercial cinema after the war. He criticised the Ministry of Information for making what he called a false distinction between theatrical and non-theatrical films, and for trying to combine the propagandist appeal of a short recruiting film with the qualities of documentary realism."

**The Pontypool Educational Settlement Film Society** reports: Although the Settlement opened for its present session last autumn, it was not until January of this year that we were able to start the season's series of film shows. So far we have shown the following films: *The End of St. Petersburg*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Turn of the Tide* and *Rembrandt*. For our future programmes we have booked: *Spanish Earth*, *And So to Work*, *Kameradschaft*, *Potemkin*, *Song of Ceylon* and *The Plow that Broke the Plains*.

**The Dundee and St. Andrews Film Society** presented the French film *Seraudé*, directed by Jean Boyer, on Sunday, February 22nd. Two shorts, *Transfer of Power* and *Aircscrew* were also shown.

**Scottish Churches Film Guild** (Glasgow Branch) showed *Try What Love Will Do* at their March meeting. It was considered quite suitable for religious teaching though the opinion was that it was insufficient just to shake hands after the workman had been dismissed and remained unemployed without any compensation being given.

**The Belfast Film Institute Society** reports:—

With the showing of *La Femme du Boulanger* already reported in D.N.L., the season of seven shows originally planned came to an end. But as interest in the Society's work seemed to be well maintained it has been decided to arrange one further show for May 9th. For this the feature film booked is *Shors*, which would provide interesting comparison with *Chaparev*, which was shown in autumn. It is hoped that we shall be able to secure some representative recent Soviet shorts to complete the programme. Publication of the Society's monthly Film Review is being continued until June and the season will end with the Annual General Meeting in late May. At this meeting it has been our custom to show some sub-standard film of historic interest but so far no definite arrangements have been made for this year's meeting (but it would be unfortunate if the practice had to be broken), for although the Society have screened many films there has been nothing in the way of discussion and lecture meetings in this past winter.

**The Workers' Film Association Ltd.** is not allowing the war to interfere with its work of popularising the film as a medium of education and propaganda. Proposals are under consideration for the production of a film on the Cavalcade of Labour. This film will show how the workers through struggle and comradeship have attained a position of partnership in the State at the most critical period of our history.

A Film Summer School is being arranged at Holywell Manor, St. Hugh's College, Oxford, during the period 18th to 24th July. The speakers so far secured are Mr. George Ridley, M.P., Mr. George Pearson "Feature Films and Social Problems", Mr. Oliver Bell, "How the Film has become one of our most important ambassadors"; Mr. Pat Mannon, film critic of the *Daily Herald*, "The films I review"; Mr. Ritchie Calder, "How the film can be used for scientific education"; Mr. Anthony Asquith, "I turn Film Critic"; Mr. Ivor Montagu, "Soviet Films", and finally Joseph Reeves, "Recent successes of the Workers' Film Association." Films will be screened during the week on democracy, Soviet Union, etc.

As accommodation will be limited, application should be made to Mr. J. Reeves, Workers' Film Association Ltd., Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1, as soon as possible.

## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

With the meeting on March 18th, the Glasgow Society completed its ordinary meetings for the present season. Two extra meetings have still to be held, the first of these taking the form of a joint matinee with the Glasgow Branch of the Scottish Educational Film Association, in the Cosmo Cinema. The programme will consist of films suitable for the higher forms of secondary schools, and should do much to arouse the interest of these students in the activities of the Society.

The second extra meeting, to be held in May, will consist of a lecture, with illustrations, on "Orthochromatics", and will be a joint meeting with the Photographical Society of the Royal Technical College.

During the past season, the members have seen at the six ordinary meetings of the Society, a total of 49 films, of which nine were semi-scientific documentary, five were cartoons, and the remaining 35 scientific films were divided into groups as follows:—

Natural History	4
Zoology	6
Embryology	1
Botany	1
Hygiene and Public Health	3
Chemistry	3
Engineering	4
Physics	4
Astronomy	2
Industrial Chemistry and Metallurgy	4

The Society has not, as yet, built a programme round a single subject as the members seem to prefer one constructed on the basis of one film in each of the following classes: Zoological, Natural History, Botanical, Engineering, and Chemical or Physical.

With regard to the zoological films, the policy has been to start with the lower forms of life and proceed through a complete series. An innovation this season was the inclusion of a "March of Time" film in each programme and this was so successful that it will be continued until the supply is exhausted.



# NEWS & SPECIALISED THEATRE ASSOCIATION

## SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR APRIL/MAY 1942

	Week commencing		Week commencing		Week commencing
<b>Aeronautics</b>		<b>November Celebrations.</b>		<b>Stranger than Fiction 84</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 3rd	The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	April 26th	The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 10th
The News Theatre, Leeds	4th	<b>Old New Orleans</b>		<b>Stranger than Fiction No. 93</b>	
<b>Army Clampons</b>		The News Theatre, Bristol	April 19th	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	April 26th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 10th	The Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	May 3rd	<b>Stone</b>	
<b>At the Stroke of 12</b>		The News Theatre, Leeds	May 11th	The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 19th
The News Theatre, Bristol	19th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	17th	<b>Strong Point 42</b>	
The News Theatre, Manchester	19th	<b>Old New Mexico</b>		The Tatler News Theatre, Birmingham	April 19th
<b>Australia Marches with Britain</b>		The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 26th	<b>Symphony in Snow</b>	
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	April 26th	<b>On the Spot</b>		Eros Theatre, W.1	April 30th
<b>Besieged Odessa</b>		The News Theatre, Leeds	April 20th	The News Theatre, Manchester	May 3rd
The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 3rd	The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	26th	<b>The Carpenters</b>	
<b>Cannoe Caddy</b>		<b>On Ice</b>		The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 20th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 26th	The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	April 26th	<b>The Golden Touch</b>	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	27th	<b>Pampos Paddocks</b>		The Old South	May 4th
<b>Caribbean Sentinel</b>		The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 17th	<b>The Man I Cured</b>	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 10th	<b>Plane Sailing</b>		The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 19th
<b>Ceramics</b>		The News Theatre, Birmingham	April 19th	<b>Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow</b>	May 11th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne		<b>Please Answer</b>		<b>The Poets Weigh Anchor</b>	
<b>Child Psychology</b>		The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 3rd	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 3rd
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 3rd	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	11th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 10th
<b>Common Heritage</b>		<b>Polar Trappers</b>		The News Theatre, Leeds	May 11th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 10th	Eros Theatre, W.1	April 19th	<b>The Robber Kitten</b>	
<b>Cookie Carnival</b>		Porky's Poor Fish	May 3rd	The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 26th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 19th	<b>Recruiting Daze</b>		<b>The Whalers</b>	April 23rd
<b>Dog Obdient</b>		The News Theatre, Leeds	April 20th	<b>Eros Theatre, W.1</b>	April 20th
The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	April 19th	<b>Rolling Rhythm</b>		<b>This Place Australia</b>	
The News Theatre, Leeds	May 4th	The News Theatre, Leeds	April 27th	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 20th
<b>Donald's Nephews</b>		<b>Russian Salad</b>		<b>Trail of the Buccaneers</b>	
Eros Theatre, W.1	April 26th	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	May 4th	The News Theatre, Manchester	April 19th
<b>Early to Bed</b>		Eros Theatre, W.1	April 30th	The News Theatre, Birmingham	19th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	April 20th	<b>San Francisco—Metropolis of the West</b>		The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 3rd
<b>Fifty Below Zero</b>		The News Theatre, Bristol	April 26th	<b>Three Little Pigs</b>	May 10th
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 20th	<b>Scrub Me Mama with a Boogie Beat</b>		Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	May 11th
<b>Four Legged Soldiers</b>		The News Theatre, Leeds	May 11th	<b>Three Little Wolves</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 26th	<b>Shamloo Spring</b>		Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 19th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 3rd	Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 26th	<b>Tyneside</b>	
<b>Free France</b>		<b>She was an Acrobat's Daughter</b>		The News Theatre, Aberdeen	April 26th
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	April 23rd	The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 10th	The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	April 26th
<b>Gahby Goes Fishing</b>		<b>Ship Shape</b>		The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 3rd
The News Theatre, Leeds	May 4th	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 10th	<b>Vitamin Hay</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	10th	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	April 26th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 26th
<b>Gateway to the West</b>		<b>Sign of Victory</b>		The News Theatre, Leeds	April 27th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 3rd	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 27th	The News Theatre, Birmingham	May 3rd
<b>George Washington—Country Gentleman</b>		<b>Sitka and Jeanou</b>		<b>Western Isles</b>	
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 19th	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	May 3rd	The News Theatre, Manchester	May 10th
<b>Glorious Vamp</b>		<b>Skyline Serenade</b>		<b>What's Lacroset?</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 3rd	The News Theatre, Manchester	April 27th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 10th
<b>Going Places with Graham McHanne No. 93</b>		So you won't Squawk	May 3rd	The News Theatre, Birmingham	10th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	April 19th	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 27th	The News Theatre, Leeds	11th
<b>Going Places</b>		<b>Song of the Clyde</b>		<b>Willie and the Mouse</b>	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	April 19th	The Premier News Theatre, W.1	April 30th	The Tatler Theatre, Chester	May 4th
<b>Going Places 89</b>		Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	30th	<b>World Garden</b>	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 3rd	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 10th	Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	April 26th
<b>Hedda Hoppers Hollywood</b>		<b>Spring Frocks</b>		Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	27th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	April 26th	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	April 19th		
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 17th	<b>Stranger than Fiction 89</b>			
<b>I'll Never Heil Again</b>		The News Theatre, Nottingham	April 26th		
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 27th				
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	27th				
<b>In the Rear of the Enemy</b>					
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 26th				
<b>In the Groove</b>					
The News Theatre, Manchester	May 10th				
<b>Invasion</b>					
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 20th				
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 10th				
<b>Journey in Tunisia</b>					
The News Theatre, Bristol	May 10th				
<b>Letter from Cairo</b>					
The News Theatre, Nottingham	April 26th				
The News Theatre, Nottingham	26th				
<b>Lions on the Loose</b>					
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 10th				
<b>Man who changed the World</b>					
The News Theatre, Leeds	April 20th				
<b>March of Time No. 9—America at War</b>					
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	April 19th				
The News Theatre, Nottingham	19th				
<b>March of Time No. 10</b>					
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	April 12th				
World's News Theatre, W.1	23rd				
The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	May 3rd				
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	4th				
<b>March of Time No. 11—7th Year</b>					
Eros Theatre, W.1	April 19th				
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	19th				
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 3rd				
Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth	3rd				
<b>Mereside</b>					
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	April 19th				
<b>Mickey's Autarier</b>					
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	April 26th				
<b>Mickey's Trailer</b>					
The World's News Theatre, W.1	April 26th				
<b>More about Nostrodamus</b>					
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	April 20th				
<b>Moscow Hits Back</b>					
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	April 19th				
<b>Moth and the Flame</b>					
The World's News Theatre, W.1	April 19th				

C. A. RADLEY

DESMOND DICKINSON

# SELWYN FILMS

At Present Producing  
for the Air Ministry

19 LEXHAM MEWS W.8 - - - WES. 4969

90 WARDOUR STREET W.1 - - - GER. 3265

DAVID MacKANE

WES. 4969

D. P. COOPER

## "OUR FILM"

By RALPH BOND

"OUR FILM" is something unique in British film production, for it is the first entirely voluntary and co-operative film to be made by professional workers in this country.

It started some months ago when, inspired by the epic fight of the Soviet Union, a mass meeting of all employees at Denham Studios passed a resolution of solidarity with the film workers of the Leningrad Studios who were working—and fighting—under fire.

After the meeting it occurred to several people that resolutions were not enough. They must be prepared to do something specific. So the Works Committee (representing all the Denham trade unionists) called another meeting and it was unanimously decided that they—the workers, technicians and artists—would make a film on the theme of Anglo-Soviet solidarity and offer it to the Ministry of Information here as part of their contribution to the national effort.

Three committees were set up—Script, Production and Finance. A certain amount of money was needed to pay for materials and incidentals. By gifts, subscriptions and raffles nearly £600 was raised; all the technicians and artists gave their services voluntarily. The Management gave studio space and equipment. Denham Laboratories promised to process the film free of charge, and Kodak's donated 10,000 feet of stock.

After further discussions at Works' Meetings a good, tight script was prepared and production commenced. Four days of shooting and the film was completed. It runs for fourteen minutes and seems much less. I saw it in cutting-copy state. Music and effects had still to be added, but there is no doubt that *Our Film* is a first-class job of work.

It opens with a domestic scene in a Russian village near the front line. A family is just sitting down to a meal. There is a sudden noise, the camera pans to the window. A German soldier fires his automatic rifle at the group round the table, wiping them out.

Quick dissolve to a domestic scene in an English working-class home. Again there is a noise, again the camera pans to the window, but this time it is a friend of the family pantomiming to his mates to come out for a drink.

One of the family is a factory shop steward. The next sequence, shot in the factory, reveals the concern of the workers at the delay in production. Machines are standing idle through lack of materials. The men are disgruntled and angry because the Management will not meet them to discuss the position. The shop steward, a trifle nervous and hot-headed, bursts into the Manager's office and plays hell; finally, he is promised a meeting.

The film cuts back to the U.S.S.R. A giant factory has to be evacuated as the Nazis advance towards it. The machinery is piled on lorries, to be reassembled further east and the factory is blown up by the workers.

Back in the English factory, the workers are electing their delegates for the Joint Production Committee they hope to have formed. The meeting between the managers and the workers takes place. There is deep suspicion on both sides. The argument goes on. Finally, the shop steward and

his mates convince the other side that a joint committee is the only way to solve production problems and step up output. But one of the lads put his foot in it by some indiscreet remark and just as it looks as if the argument will have to start all over again, there is an unexpected interruption. The door opens and in walks a stranger. He is one of the Soviet Trade Union representatives visiting England. Forcefully and movingly he demands that they stop arguing. He describes the critical situation of the war. There is no further quarrelling. The committee is formed and over the face of the Russian as he concludes his appeal there is superimposed a shot of tanks rolling off the conveyor belt ready for action.

That is the story of *Our Film* and little remains to be said except that here is a film that somehow or other should get into every cinema and every factory in the country. It is extremely well made and acted, and although there are no credits, the foremost technicians in the camera, sound, art, editing and other departments of Denham have put their best into it.

*Our Film* admirably fits the needs of the moment. At a time when greater production and Joint Production Committees to achieve it is the main topic of urgency in industry, this film makes a tremendously important contribution. Its propaganda is direct, forceful and entirely logical.

Congratulations to all concerned at Denham.

## FILMS IN U.S.S.R.

Emmer is working on a film which tells the story of a raid by a Red Army division, led by a young Soviet General, in the German rear. The script is by the celebrated writer, Alexei Tolstoy.

Roshal is making a short film entitled *The Murderer Steps Out*, depicting the career of a German fascist leader and showing how he came to power with the aid of shady German businessmen and reactionary politicians.

L. Kuleshov, one of the older generation of Soviet film directors, is making a film entitled *Norwegians*, depicting the heroism of Norwegian fishermen who help British airmen and Soviet sailors to destroy a German transport. The scenario is by another well known Soviet novelist, Konstantin Fedin.

Pudovkin is producing an anti-fascist film based on short stories by Bert Brecht, the famous German anti-fascist poet and author.

S. M. Eisenstein, in addition to supervising the production of short propaganda films, is preparing the scenario of an historical film entitled *Ivan the Terrible*, which will emphasise not so much the personal character of this ruler, so often dealt with in films and novels, as his important historical side, his foundation of the Russian State out of disconnected feudal principalities, his cementing of it by victories against the Tartars, and his diplomatic relations with other countries, such as the establishment of the flax trade with England.

## G.-B. INSTRUCTIONAL LTD.

THE STUDIOS • LIME GROVE • SHEPHERD'S BUSH • W.12

Contractors for documentary and training films to Government Departments and principal commercial organisations.

Producers of "Secrets of Life"

Telephone: Shepherd's Bush 1210

Telegrams: Gebestruct, Chisk, London

# ARMY FILMS

By R. S. MILES, L/Cpl.

I read with great interest the article by John Maddison in the March issue of D.N.L., and would like to give some brief description of what I have done on similar lines.

Before joining the Army I did some lectures for troops on behalf of the Regional Committee on Education for H.M. Forces. I nearly always insisted on using films and gave talks on "Raw Materials", "Oil", "The Blockade", illustrated by films whose titles are too well known for reiteration here. At one depot where I "filled in" for a lecturer on holiday with twenty minutes of film, half an hour's talk, and what seemed to be an endless discussion, the O.C. said that it was the first talk he had been able to understand. With a small unit I did twelve lectures on "Film Appreciation" during the course of which I showed *Marcus Lycinius*, *The Great Train Robbery*, a Chaplin selection, *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*, *Potemkin* (two reels), various educational and M.O.I. films, together with such documentaries as *Night Mail* and *North Sea*. They wanted the course to continue and their interest was evident by the fact that out of a unit of 60 I had voluntary attendances of 50—the others were mainly on picket. Recently I was interviewed by the Command Education Officer and this course of lectures was mentioned appreciatively.

Since being called up I have been able to do some work with films. I organised twelve lectures on "The History and Social Significance of the Cinema" (horrid title). Attendances varied between two and fifty. I showed such films as *The Great Train Robbery*, *Marcus Lycinius*, Chaplin selections, selections from *Potemkin*, *General Line*, *Metropolis*, *The Last Laugh*, *Caligari* (in full), *Song of Ceylon*, *Night Mail*, *The Londoners*, *Enough to Eat*, *The River*, *Transfer of Power*, *Distillation*, *Self-Defence by Plants*, *The Expansion of Germany*, *The Pilot is Safe*, *Merchant Seamen*, *When the Pie was Opened*, etc.

I will not claim that the series was as successful as I had hoped, but out of it I was able to persuade the Education Officer to sponsor Sunday afternoon shows. Many of them have been rather opportunist in character, but we have shown *The General Line*, *The Ghost that Never Returns*, *Owd Bob*, *Matto Grosso*, *Man of Aran*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and we had proposed showing *White Hell of Pitz Palu*, *Thunder over Mexico*, and *The Battleship Potemkin*, but various unforeseen circumstances and the advent of summer have caused the abandoning for the time being of these, and by the coming of winter I shall probably not be here at all.

These last shows have been very successful. About 180 people have attended and many have been turned away. For the last show, *The Turn of the Tide*, a gymnasium was well crowded.

All these shows were preceded by a brief talk on the important points of the film, and I felt that a succession of these films, well mixed in stories, interest and technique, was not only providing entertainment but raising the standard of film going. "Shopping for films" was being taught to a large number of men, and thus I think the film can have some educational value apart from its undoubted use in the Army, for vitalising much of Army education and making technical training more efficient.



In future The Strand Film Company will be working in conjunction with British National Films Ltd. Strand Films will continue to function as a production unit, and the same Technical Staff will carry on.

The British National Studios at Elstree will be Strand Films production headquarters. Particulars of new London offices will be given shortly.



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR • MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW • DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MAY, 1942

## CONTENTS

WAR OF NERVES?	65
NOTES OF THE MONTH	66
FEATURE FILM PROPAGANDA	67
"THE HARVEST SHALL COME"	68
FEATURE FILM OF THE MONTH	69
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	70
THE GOLD RUSH AGAIN	71
THE WORLD IN ACTION	72
M.O.I. ROSTER	74
SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES	76
THE WAR—A PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION by Henry A. Wallace	77
THE PROPAGANDA VALUE OF ACHIEVEMENT by Edith R. Manvell	79
CORRESPONDENCE	80

VOL 3 NO 5

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## WAR OF NERVES?

THE MOST important propaganda event for many months was the Prime Minister's broadcast of May 10th. Mr. Churchill's insistence on our greatly increased striking power seemed to foreshadow a new military phase in the war and this possibility deeply stirred the whole country. For the first time since the outbreak of war we were threatening the enemy, not in a spirit of defiant defence, but in the mood of a strong man who sees a bully cringing before him. Mr. Churchill tormented the Nazis with the irony of their increasing vulnerability to the very weapons they themselves had chosen. He jeered at their blunders with all the assurance of a man who could look to the future not only with faith but with complete confidence. This, said his listeners, must be the turning point of the war. For the Prime Minister had said:

"The British, and presently the American, bombing offensive against Germany will be one of the principal features in this year's world war.

"Now is the time to use our increasingly superior air strength to strike hard and continually at the home front in Germany from which so much evil has leaped out on the world and which is the foundation of the whole enormous invasion of Russia. . . .

"... We have a long list of German cities in which the vital industries of the German war machine are established. All these it will be our stern duty to deal with, as we have already dealt with Lübeck, with Rostock, and half a dozen important places.

"The civil population of Germany have, however, an easy way of escape from these severities. All they have to do is to leave the cities where munition work is being carried on, abandon their work and go out into the fields and watch the home fires burning from a distance."

Public feeling was undoubtedly well satisfied with the policy of hitting Germany hard from the air. The British people wanted to go and finish the war in the only place where it could be finished—in Germany. The relentless quality of the speech was good propaganda and—at the same time—a pretty accurate reflection of the public mood. The Prime Minister was articulating and integrating public feeling and giving it direction. To add to the expectations he had aroused of a new military policy he spoke as follows of the crowds which had recently gathered in Trafalgar Square to call for a cond front:

"Is it not far better that demonstrations of thousands of people should gather in Trafalgar Square demanding the most vehement and audacious attacks than that there should be the weepings and wailings and peace agitations which in other lands and other wars have often hampered the action and vigour of governments?"

The day after the broadcast the nation stood ready for action—for intensive bombing of Germany and for some sign of raids or even an offensive against the continental coast line. The turning point of the war had come. What they asked was to be the first shattering manifestation of the new spirit?

At the time of going to press, three weeks have passed and although our Russian allies are engaged in a battle on which the result of the war may depend, there has been no sign whatsoever of British offensive action on land. Worse still, there has been only one air-raid on Germany of any significance during the whole period. A people which is very well aware of how little towards deciding the war was achieved by nightly Nazi air-raids on London for weeks on end can scarcely be expected to believe that occasional cricketing-weather attacks on isolated targets in a much vaster and more inaccessible country is to be the means of beating Germany.

Whatever are the true facts there can be no doubt that the Prime Minister's broadcast aroused expectations which have not yet been fulfilled by events. Ordinarily such a state of affairs is not vitally serious, for in war-time miscalculations are bound to be made. But this broadcast seemed to be of great and special significance. If events should continue to give no support to the hopes it held out the effect upon public feeling will be considerable. No propagandist will underestimate the effect upon the British people if they come to think that their leaders are substituting words for actions. The public, because of its experiences in the last war, is basically cynical in face of rhetorical attitudes. So far, throughout his period of office, Mr. Churchill has been careful to measure words by deeds. Whatever his opinion may be of the importance of propaganda he must continue to remember that words must be used with responsibility as well as with virtuosity. He would be ill-advised to put his gifts as an orator at the service of those of our leaders who believe that occasional air-raids on Germany can be verbally disguised to look like an offensive which will satisfy the demand for a Second Front. The crowds whom Mr. Churchill welcomed to Trafalgar Square were not there to play with words or to be congratulated with well-turned phrases. They wanted action. The professional propagandists know that there is a war-winning mood in this country—a mood which, if utilised, will make it unnecessary for today's policies to be inhibited as they are now, by the cautious war economies of 1944. It is the duty of propagandists who know their business and who wish the United Nations to win the war quickly to articulate and direct that war-winning mood and to see that it is not dissipated by rhetorical speeches, however unimpeachable may be the sentiments they express. Delay between threat and execution is dangerous.



# NOTES OF THE MONTH

## Man-Power

On June 30th a large number of film workers' deferment cases are due to come up for review. The film industry succeeded last year—after something of a struggle—in establishing the necessity of retaining what was, in effect, a minimum number of people in order to maintain a satisfactory output of feature as well as of propaganda films. The arguments for the deferment of key personnel need no repetition, since they are just as valid now as they were then (see *D.N.L.*, April, 1941). Nevertheless, the entire film industry is perturbed at the recent action of the Ministry of Labour in setting up a new man-power panel to deal with films. This perturbation arises largely from the fact that the new panel, unlike the last, does not include representatives of the industry. It has three members. Two of them, Col. Bromhead and S. Rowson, are, it is true, film-men; but on this panel they appear as government servants, the former representing the M.O.I. and the latter the Board of Trade. The qualifications of the third member of the panel—Professor Plant—would appear to arise from the fact that he was a member of the Moyne Commission. We have no doubt that these three gentlemen are sincerely anxious to reconcile the general needs of man-power with the particular needs of the film industry in war-time; and we hope that if they find any unqualified or obviously redundant workers still in employment in films they will take the obvious and appropriate action. But as far as the documentary and propaganda side of the industry is concerned, we are certain that the strictest possible investigation would merely prove once again the fact that the documentary firms have hardly enough staff to fulfil the increasing demands of Government Departments for official propaganda, informational or instructional films. It would, however, be a disaster if the case for deferment of feature film workers were to be neglected. It cannot be too often stressed that a healthy national film industry is not merely a national asset but also a national necessity. Films like *The Foreman Went to France* or *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* show that the feature film makers have a sense of responsibility as well as imaginative and technical ability. For these reasons we hope that the stories of feature film companies having rough passages with the new panel over the deferment of key personnel are untrue or exaggerated. If by any chance they are not, we urge the Ministry of Labour to give the trade every facility to state its case to the new panel, which, unlike the more representative body which it has superseded, is not intimately involved in the immediate problems of production and distribution.

## A Box Office Instructional

A NOTEWORTHY example of the value of a British feature film industry is provided by the release to the public of a film originally made for troop-training purposes. *Next of Kin* is having a deserved success with the public, and is at the same time doing a good job of propaganda, particularly in its final sequence, which (because it is a training film) shows the process of war in anything but a romantic light and thereby punches home its "Don't talk" message in an exceptionally vigorous manner. *Next of Kin* was made for the Department of Army Kinematography, and one would like to hope that all the films put out by this department (most of which are, of course, on a much more modest scale) were equally successful in putting their message or their instruction across with the same compelling vigour. But reports received from a number of men in the Services appear to indicate very much otherwise. Some of the films, we are told, are monotonous to the point of somnolence; others make statements which conflict with current training. Too many films are shown at the same time, often when the audience is already tired—physically or mentally—or both. In general there would still

seem to be room for improvement both at the production and at the distribution end of the D.A.K.

## Too Many Committees

THE BASIS of democratic government is the committee. But while the committee is democracy's greatest strength, it can also become its greatest weakness. For instance, it becomes weakness when a democratic method of government is losing ground; for then the committee, instead of acting as the consultative organisation geared to vitalise the community, becomes instead a method of stifling criticism, or of channelling it off into sterility. These thoughts are provoked by the multiplicity of committees now engaged in considering all aspects of film and propaganda. Members of the Editorial Board find that no week passes without their being engaged at a minimum of three meetings a week. If all these committees led to constructive action and if all these committees were intended to have power, nobody could complain. But the thought is beginning to occur to many people that these committees are being used to suppress or side-track any critical voice. For years now skilful method of government has been seized on by vested interests, aimed at utilising a "get-together" method to achieve all manner of dubious ambitions of their own. They pander to the innate vanity of human beings by giving them "off the record" information so that they, the committee, feel more important than their fellow-men. They deliberately set members of committees against one another, skilfully exploiting presumed self interest. They allow resolutions to be passed and decisions taken which cannot be dealt with until the next meeting, by which time new deletions and "references back" can water down decisive action. We wonder whether this present sprawling mass of committees in the Film Industry, which is multiplied a thousand times over in other industries, is not an insidious method of direct governing by vested interests, mainly industrial but also departmental? While we still talk of "they" and not "we", the committee still fundamentally remains an opportune weapon for vested interests operating a phoney democracy.

## The Last House

WHILE THE M.O.I. Five Minuters seem, on the whole, to be achieving a pretty good circulation, we have recently received disturbing reports that some cinemas have taken to omitting them from their last performance. The last house—particularly nowadays—is the fullest house, and if the Five Minuters are not shown it must mean a considerable drop in the total audience figures. We shall be glad to receive reports from readers of occasions when the Five Minute film was not shown at the last performance. Please give time, place, and date.

## Stop It

IT APPEARS that, despite their utter uselessness and wastefulness, direct advertising films are still being made. Cannot the M.O.I. take some direct action in this matter either on its own account or in conjunction with the Board of Trade? There is every reason for action, since the latest scandal to be reported is that a very large London cinema was found, a few weeks ago, to be running a film advertising tea in place of the M.O.I. Five Minuter. Once more we must reiterate that the advertising film has no place in the national effort. If any competent technicians are being employed on the production of these films, they should be drafted either into units engaged on work of national value or into the army. In cases of this sort the Ministry of Labour man-power panel should, always providing it knows its job, have no difficulty in separating the sheep from the goats. Every advertising film made during war is a waste of film, of man-power and of mind-power.

# FEATURE FILM PROPAGANDA

DURING the first two years of war the film was making its contribution to the war effort almost exclusively through the medium of the short documentary. For the most part feature films continued to provide simple, peacetime-style entertainment and many people in the film industry appeared to be content with this situation and happy in the rôle of providing for cinema-goers a means of vicarious escape from the painful fact of war. The majority of film-makers, however, felt that they were professionally equipped to play a more serious part. They did not wish simply to provide light entertainment for people engaged in a life and death struggle: they wished to make films which would themselves be weapons of war. As a consequence our screens have lately been swamped with propaganda features—films about the war from British studios which are beginning to be supplemented by Hollywood's first reactions to Pearl Harbour. We have the advantage in Britain of something like a year's output of propaganda features based on some consideration of the problems of relating propaganda and entertainment, and it is to be hoped that Hollywood will study our failures and successes before letting loose their own inevitable flood of war pictures. For—let us face it—our own failures outnumber our successes and although by now we have had plenty of opportunity to arrive at mature decisions the problems of the feature war film are by no means solved.

To begin with there still exists a tendency to believe that entertainment value and propaganda value must be two separate considerations. Without entertainment value a film will be a commercial failure and therefore the mistake has often been made of arranging for the entertainment value first and then trying to add such propaganda emphases as will not impair the entertainment. On this line of reasoning we generally finish up with an old-fashioned thriller incorporating odd irrelevant lines of dialogue about freedom, persecution, fascism; or one of his characters will hold up the action while he makes a wordy and self-conscious speech about democracy. Hollywood has been particularly guilty of this technique and was self-consciously employing it to slip in a good word for democracy long before America came into the war. It is a hangover from the days when gangster films were being made acceptable to public morality committees by the addition of a pious peroration about graft-free government.

The obvious weakness of this type of film is the clear division between what is regarded by its producers as entertainment and what has been added as propaganda. The audience is over-aware of the distinction. They see a conventional film made according to a familiar story-formula and either they immediately recognise the propaganda for the awkward appendage it is or they are suspicious of the pill which has been so imperfectly sugared.

So much for the plots which wear their propaganda pinned on them like a war-service badge. There is another type of propaganda feature which exhibits a similar weakness. This is the film with a war-time plot which obeys identically the same dramatic conventions as have become traditionally associated in the cinema with purely fictional themes. Here the war background of realism and fact is subsidiary to a personal story of romantic adventure—often a

simple love story—and the war is used only to provide a topical atmosphere. Into this category fall such films as *Ships with Wings* (the aircraft carrier was only a background for the old story of the reckless flyer in disgrace retrieving his reputation and the respect of the boss's daughter by giving his life for his comrades); *Pimpernel Smith* (absent-minded professor becoming the instrument of justice), and *One Night in Lisbon* (traditional spy melodrama). Films of this kind are bad propaganda because they present the war in absurdly romantic terms and their entertainment value is impaired by the conflict in the mind of the audience between the hard facts of real war and its glamorous embellishments in the film.

Let us consider what has been achieved by the many recent films which have been specifically about the war and have not merely used it as background or made passing references to it or to underlying political and philosophical issues. Amongst the most important films in this category are *49th Parallel*, *The Big Blockade*, *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*, *The Day Will Dawn*, *The Foreman Went to France* (all British), together with a big batch of American films on the Gestapo. These films take themes such as anti-Nazism in the occupied countries, the temperamental clash between individual democrats and fascists, the economic war against Germany, the menace of secret Nazi organisations in the United States, and seek to present all these in entertaining form.

*The Big Blockade* was the most ambitious of them, attempting as it did the fearsome task of presenting a complete picture of economic warfare. The producers clearly felt that they had on their hands a very large propaganda pill which would need to be generously coated. The result was a sour-sweet hotch-potch, a curious compound of academics and box-office tricks, which failed to be either informative or entertaining. The plain fact was that the film had attempted too much. *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* and *The Day Will Dawn* were less pretentious, yet failed for other reasons to present a convincing picture of the experiences of British fugitives in occupied territory. These films, one felt, were the product of studio-bred imaginations. The episodes and the dialogue, gestures and glances that composed them, came not from the war but from some scenario-writer's handy guide to box-office appeal. The people in these two films were not real—and that was not simply because they were played by familiar actors, handicap though that is in this type of film. The characters were lay figures without that indefinable something in gesture or appearance that distinguishes the man from the mummer. In *49th Parallel*, however, Michael Powell did achieve something quite remarkable with familiar screen faces. Here was a film with an idea—the personal clash between individual Nazis of different types and a number of representative democrats. The idea was good as entertainment and good as a propaganda opportunity. Within the simple theme of the film, propaganda and entertainment were fused—it was the propaganda itself that was entertaining. *49th Parallel* simply proves once again that the presence of an imaginative idea (that rare asset) will guarantee the success of any film whether it be for entertainment or propaganda. *The Foreman Went to France*, the last on our list of films about the war, is in most ways the best. The rea-

son for its superiority, both as entertainment and propaganda, over *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* is especially interesting. Both films are based upon a real war-time occurrence yet *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* lacks confidence in the dramatic power of the actual event and has consequently embellished it, translated it out of terms of ordinary human behaviour and tried to prove too many generalisations about occupied Holland. The film has outgrown the strength of its original anecdote. *The Foreman Went to France* sticks to its story and tries to stick to its human beings. The French are there all the time, not too much emphasised, not pointed out crudely as heroes or saints to prove a propaganda point, but left to move easily and naturally through the scenes as decent people with their weaknesses as well as their strengths.

This surely is the way to use an entertainment medium to make propaganda for the things we are fighting for. Don't try to tell the whole story of France or Holland or Norway or Britain, but take some people and show what happens to them in a credible war situation—it may be a real situation or an imaginary one—provided it is credible that doesn't matter. The really important thing is that the people you choose should stay human. The public doesn't believe that the war is being fought between an army of plaster saints on our side and an army of creatures with horns and tails on the other. Outside the cinema they never meet people from either category and it is useless to make propaganda in terms of beings that exist only in the cinema. If you do so your propaganda will relate only to a cinema war and—if it has any effect at all—it will create a glamorised dream image of war which is vastly more dangerous than if you had no propaganda at all. War cannot be conducted according to the romantic traditions of behaviour which motivate conventional film scenarios.

The propaganda power of realistic treatment and the inhibitions of conventional treatment are admirably demonstrated in *The Next of Kin*. The opening reels are cluttered up with conventional nonsense but wherever the film has to deal with situations or behaviour on which its army audiences are expert it becomes realistic, and in consequence makes first-class propaganda and first-class entertainment. For the first time in a studio-made film we see a real battle between real soldiers. The Russians understand completely the importance in propaganda of realistic treatment and credible human behaviour. Their biographical films of other wars still make good propaganda in this. Compare *General Sidorov* with Hollywood's *Sergeant York*. The flesh and blood of the latter story has been hidden by a lacquer of glamour and romance. It becomes simply a new novelistic adventure of Gary Cooper's. *The New Teacher*, a pre-war Soviet film on education, is war propaganda because it is propaganda for a country clearly worth fighting for. It is a country inhabited by people who look, laugh, complain and struggle like people, not like movie-stars. For a source both of propaganda and entertainment let the British and American studios go back to the people who are fighting this war. Let us see not only why they are fighting and how they are fighting but let us be inspired by the fact that the war does not change them—they remain human beings.

## The Documentary of the Month

# THE HARVEST SHALL COME

*Production:* Realist Film Unit for Imperial Chemical Industries. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Direction:* Max Anderson. *Camera:* A. E. Jeakins. *Script:* H. W. Freeman. *Music:* William Alwyn. *Commentators:* Edmund Willard and Bruce Belfrage. *Cast:* John Slater, Eileen Beldon and Richard George. *Running time:* 40 minutes.

The documentary film has too frequently in the past and still today been stigmatised as a cold, objective reporting of facts. Its critics harp back to the early days of sound when many documentaries were simply pictures illustrated by commentary. The critics have taken no heed of the advances made by documentary since 1933. Grierson emphasised in this advance the importance of the human factor in relation to whatever story was being told, but as it was not at first possible to employ expensive synchronous sound, the earliest documentaries were restricted to the bringing alive of ordinary human beings in visual terms. Grierson brought Robert Flaherty to this country to add to the documentary films that quality of human feeling that Flaherty had so successfully developed elsewhere. Parallel with this development went the development of sound. The documentary was impatient with the purely reproductive cinema, and when it acquired sound, it endeavoured to use it imaginatively. Grierson brought Cavalcanti to this country to aid in this development; so that simultaneously two developments were proceeding—the development of the human interest and the development of imaginative sound.

These developments did not obscure the fact that documentary was not being built up simply as a method of film-making but as a means to an end. Its readiness to adopt all the new developments and to be in the van of technical progress did not mean that it was neglecting the possibilities of other methods of evolving its theories. There were many attempts to adapt the story. At first documentary naturally looked to the reporting of true stories from life, and these found their beginnings in *North Sea*. There were two reasons why documentaries did not go more fully into the story type of film—one was their desire to master craft; and secondly, the limitation of finance. Films like *Merchant Seamen* and *Target for Tonight* are films modelled on the work done in the early *North Sea* period. They have an immediate dramatic appeal because their subjects in themselves are dramatic; but today that side of documentary film-making shows no signs of advance, except in technical quality.

These remarks are only a preface to consideration of a new documentary film, *The Harvest Shall Come*, which marks one of documentary's most significant steps forward. It is the first genuine story film made with the documentary purpose and by documentary method. The story is that of a farm labourer and his family, their life from the day when he joins the farm as a youngster in the nineteen-hundreds to the present war. The main parts are played by actors, and the background is filled in by local

Suffolk villagers. Because of the integrity of the script writing and direction there are no points where the two groups clash. The actors merge into their background. There are no false situations and there are none of the story twists so dear to the hearts of our professional script-writers. The films pulls no punches and tells the unfortunate story of the decay of British agriculture, which in the last forty years has only been encouraged by the incidence of two wars. The story is fiction, but it reflects the life of every British farm labourer and is heart-tearing in its sincerity and in the power of its deliberate understatement. It is a great tribute to that section of the community—the farm workers—who have borne the burden of the industry's decay.

The film has all been photographed on location and tells its story purely by dialogue. Even the cottage interiors were shot in the village. There is a lack of technical polish about the film which only adds to its quality as a rugged documentary. It has been argued that a certain technical brilliance of the photography in *The Grapes of Wrath* tended to emphasise the unreality of certain sequences, particularly in the "Okie" camp. If there is any criticism to be made it is that the artificial sequence of the two women

who tip the main character because he is only a farm labourer illustrates the difficulty in adding to an honest story some extraneous incident to push the argument home.

The film has deliberately eschewed the lyrical approach to the countryside so beloved of the romantic impressionists of documentary. Here there are no fine billowing clouds and rich meadow-land looming through the filters. It is not forgotten that behind the beauty of the rambling roses and the thatched roof is the squalor of rural housing. The film is sober in tone and has that purposeful insistence on facts that is a characteristic of all good documentary.

The film marks the emergence of one of the best documentary directors for many years—Max Anderson—and of the actors, it should be said that John Slater, playing the main character, is an outstanding interpreter of working-class character. There is no doubt that this film must be shown in the ordinary cinemas, and will undoubtedly prove an outstanding success. Its honesty, its closeness to the hopes and fears of ordinary people, its reflection of the nobility and heroism of the ordinary working man, will reach out to the hearts of any audience.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Park Studios

Putney Park Lane

S.W.15.

TEL. unchanged

Putney 6274



FILMS OF GREAT BRITAIN LIMITED

## The Feature Film of the Month

# THE NEW TEACHER

*The New Teacher.* Production: Lenfilm 1939. Directed by Sergei Gerasimov. Photography: V. Yakovlev. With Boris Chirkov as the teacher, Pavel Volkov as his father, L. Shabalina as his sister and Tamara Makarova as the girl friend.

It's a funny thing about Russian films over the last ten years or so, those that we've seen over here at any rate, how few of them deal with contemporary problems and present day Russian life. I suppose the main reason for this is that the old-guard directors, middle class intellectuals to the last, were heartily bored with the period of five-year plans and Soviet construction, and always wanted to be harking back to the good old days of upheaval, when noble revolutionaries were having exciting times shooting people. Old Professor Eisenstein, presented in *The General Line* with the magnificent theme of the revolution of agriculture by the collective farm and new techniques, was much more interested in old-time religious rituals and could find in the arrival of a new cream separator only a sexual significance. A village getting electric light for the first time, so important to the people concerned, to the intellectuals who had always had it was just a bore. Uncle Pudovkin, baulked of bombs and street-fighting at home, ran off to Germany where there was still some going, to make *Deserter*. Only Dovzhenko calmly carried on in his same old line, which as *Ivan, Aerograd and Shors* showed, magnificently survives a revolution, construction war or any other human activity.

Of course we knew really that there must be plenty of other stuff going on under the surface, young working lads coming on who were part and parcel of the new society and not hangovers from the old, directors who were from the people and part of them, who looked on them as equals and not as queer creatures who must be talked and teased into doing what they were told. Fred Ermler, from the silent days, carried on (in *Counterplan* and others) in his same quiet constructive way. Kozintsev and Trauberg in the *Maxim* series got a bit nearer to present day stuff; there was *Daigan*, there was *Macheret* of *Men and Jobs*. And there was a whole run of films which, although second-grade or even worse technically, were far more interesting just because they showed something of contemporary Russia than all the dreary overdyed historical reconstructions like *Nevsky* or *Suvorov*. All the time while watching a poor film like *Jazz Comedy* or *The Rich Bride* you get a feeling of excitement at getting some idea of what up and coming Russians were feeling and doing.

And now here at last is *The New Teacher*, the first really complete expression of the new Russia, a fine subject and a fine film. Gerasimov the director is only a young lad—apparently his first film *The Seven Brave* was shown over here a

few years ago—but in spite of, or rather, probably because of that, he seems more completely at home with talkie technique than any other Russian directors. The film is on the whole as well made, the people as nicely handled and placed for the camera, and the detail as full as anything by John Ford, say, whose films Gerasimov knows well, I bet. There are one or two roughnesses of course, but in the end they don't affect the real quality of the film at all. This quality is made up of a creative belief in the possibilities of human life, a firm sense of being at home in the world and liking it and a warm human feeling for the pleasantness of people. I don't remember ever having seen a film where you got a stronger impression of people with confidence and independence who were going to make of life exactly what they wanted. And when at the end the hero jumps out of the window, looks out over the moonlit countryside and exclaims "Ah! Life, life!" you know that here are people for whom as for the Americans the world is all fresh and new, a place of limitless possibilities; but people for whom this vital innocence and simplicity is based, not as in the new world on ignorance, but on full knowledge. You have only to compare this film with any German film to realise completely where the hope of the old world with its load of guilt lies.

*The New Teacher* (a bad title) is a simple story about a village and a family in the new Russia. The son, beautifully played by Boris Chirkov (*Maxim*) has been working as a teacher in Moscow and thought of by the village as a lad who has gone to the big city and made good. He comes back to the village, and their eager welcome of their distinguished visitor turns to disappointment and anger when they find that he's come not on a visit, but to stay. Clever, distinguished and pushful relations are all very well in the big city at a distance from which you can safely boast about them and their exploits, but it is altogether a different story when they're on your own doorstep upsetting your life with their fancy ideas. The rest of the film tells how he comes to terms with the village, with his father and family, with his girl friend and with himself, and the strength of the film is that all these conflicts are honestly resolved and not sentimentally by-passed. The film is warm and human and all the people very pleasant, but what is so good is that the point of the film is not how pleasant the people are, but where they're getting to. There is no morbid interest in private emotions; these people are part of a live community, and their feelings are all shared feelings.

In a way you could call the whole thing propaganda, but that doesn't matter in the least, partly because it never tries to twist the truth and partly because you can always listen to somebody carrying on if he really cares about what he is

talking about. There is an amazing richness of detail about the whole film which shows that Gerasimov really understands what's going on and hasn't mechanically simplified everything. There's the set-up in the family itself, father an old Partisan Bolshevik who dominates the others, mother under this thumb, auntie under both of them, and driven silly by continual housework, daughter very much alive and independent and obviously quite capable of dealing with dad when the time comes. There's the understanding of other people's points of view shown by dad's practical complaints about the holidays interfering with his moving—he's chairman of the collective farm. And there's the relationship of father and son, so often done before but never so well as this. Father half-proud, half-contemptuous of his son, resentful of his youth and cleverness, trying to patronise him and half hoping he's going to make a fool of himself; son nervous as a cat and falling into priggishness—a conflict honestly resolved, not as, for instance, in Renon's *Man Who Came Back* by a sentimental acceptance of the present, but by a creative view of the future.

And there's a crowd of detail which is extremely pleasant not only for its warmth and humour but for its added feeling of going somewhere: the dance to welcome the son home, with the girls coming forward one by one to sing themselves into the company; his sister and girl friend lying in bed afterwards listening to father carrying on and chatting intimately of adolescent this and that's; the village question-meeting with the boy asking advice on an appalling Heath Robinson invention which won't work; the holidaytime with the two lovers in embarrassed and frustrated silence while the shouts of people enjoying themselves together come faintly over the meadows; and the end, where the teacher, on terms at last with his girl friend, is warmed all through at the pleasantness of life in general, lifts his young sister on to the stairs and kisses her, goes into his own room, and gazing at his airman pal who is shamming sleep, remarks, "What a funny fellow", and then jumps out of the window to have a look at the night and think how nice life is. The only thing I could have wished was for him when he came back into his room to have fetched out a bottle of vodka, woken his pal and then had a bloody good booze-up together. It would have made a perfect end; but never mind, the film is beautifully made and beautifully acted, particularly father, son and sister, and what's more it is a real treat to meet a director who, well in with the people as he is, takes for granted the fact that they are pleasant and goes on from there to tell them what they should be up to. If up and coming Russia is like this (and I'm sure it is), there's nothing for Stalin to worry about, and Hitler is just wasting his own and everybody's time.



# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Middle East.** Production: Shell Film Unit. Producer: Edgar Anstey. Direction: Grahame Tharp. Diagrams: Francis Rodker. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject:** The importance of the Middle East in allied world strategy.

**Treatment:** Plain diagrams with the minimum of animation, straight commentary and a few drum rolls. The subject is clearly treated and well expressed but by its nature it is really no more than a lecture illustrated by a map of the world. Only in one place, the illustration of what the greater length of sea communications means to us, is there any real use of diagrams. The film does, however, succeed in giving quite a clear picture.

**Propaganda Value:** It is, of course, a very good idea for the M.O.I. to try and keep the public informed on issues of world strategy such as this, and for a middle-class audience no doubt this film will prove successful; but for the average cinema-going public it is all too remote and didactic. The schoolmasterly approach combined with the refined and nasal (not so say rheumy) tones of the commentator will only serve to make the general public feel that it is something which does not really concern them. I don't know what the solution is (certainly it will have to include actuality material) but something will certainly have to be done to humanise these informative films if they are to fulfil their purpose.

**London Scrapbook.** Production: Spectator Short Films. Producer: Basil Wright. Direction: Derek de Marney and Eugene Cekalski. Camera: A. H. Luff. Collected by Bessie Love and Basil Radford with Leslie Mitchell.

**Subject:** The films deals with the small changes and slight, semi-picturesque situations incidental to the more violent distress of war and through them it seeks to characterise the manner by which the familiar disasters of London have altered its outward scenes and the lives of the people living in it. The film is for American consumption.

**Treatment:** The lightness of the subject is reflected in the treatment, and Bessie Love is excellent as the unselfconscious cine-kodak amateur trying to sell her "Scrapbook" to a film-weary Films Division. No criticism of the superficial jauntiness of the film should overlook the fact that its purpose is to show those very subjects which, though less profound and therefore usually ignored, may, if properly handled, throw into relief some of the deeper sufferings which the people of London and other cities have undergone. For example, the extremely effective and nostalgic shot of the empty, windy playground in Kensington Gardens, with only one child ("the only child in London") left to feed the ducks at the feet of Peter Pan, must be as sharp in its effect on a New York mother as a complete film on the evacuation of school children. The extent to which the film succeeds in this kind of respect is the proper measure of its propaganda value, for mere light-heartedness by itself would not suffice as a pretext for showing such a film abroad. In this sense it is to be hoped, without wishing to be priggish about an extremely funny and

well-named film, that Americans will not make the mistake of believing that the tragedies of several million Londoners reduce themselves to a series of nostalgic spectacles and semi-humorous inconveniences, as they tend to do when viewed by an American woman living in circumstances likely to remove from war much of its more permanent severity. For example, Bessie Love's difficulties over rations are never so great as when she drops them in the park on her way to a party.

The film which is very well shot, contains a good parody on the M.O.I. and one of its officials (Leslie Mitchell) and is certainly excellent entertainment for anyone making documentary films and almost as certainly for anyone familiar with Anglo-Saxon cities.

**Propaganda Value:** An unusually incomprehensible paragraph on the M.O.I. programme sheet runs thus: "Owing to the fact that this film was in production when America entered the war, it has had to be re-designed and the propaganda content is therefore not as strong as it would have been but for the change of angle necessitated." Apart from what this may mean, it is safe to say that the film will at any rate suggest to Americans the depth of the sacrifice being forced by a changing environment upon a people more than usually reliant (if we are to believe the Americans) upon the familiar and traditional. Incidentally, it is a questionable whether parish jokes, however good, about fumbling at the M.O.I. are the most reassuring way of proving to Americans that our traditional sense of humour about ourselves has succeeded in keeping pace with the agencies of total war.

**Go to Blazes.** Direction: Walter Ford. Screen Play: Diana Morgan, Angus MacPhail. Camera: Ernest Palmer. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject:** Will Hay demonstrates the funny (wrong) and the funny (right) way to tackle incendiaries.

**Treatment:** We are back to the good old days of blitz propaganda when the siren has always gone ten minutes ago. The mother and the daughter are the unsympathetic heroines who know that the right people no longer use a spray but a jet, and Will Hay, after fooling bravely with several fires is packed off to the Warden's Post next to the "Pig and Whistle" to brush up his A.R.P.

**Propaganda Value:** If people really lose their heads over incendiaries as quickly as Will Hay, or, like him, as soon forget the lessons they have been taught under fire, then the film ought to have been made. Otherwise not.

**Men of India.** Presented by M.O.I. Made by the Indian Film Unit, Bombay. Direction: Ezra Mir. Camera: Jinaraja Bodhye. Editor: Phatpat Parmar. Production: Alexander Shaw. English Commentary: Edmund Willard for Strand Films.

**Subject:** Factory production in India and the part Indians are playing in the war effort.

**Treatment:** Indian fire-fighters at a realistic practice remind us that air-raids threaten also the war production of that continent. The forceful commentator—he who spoke on "Naval Operations"

—describes how the men of India, of many races and many religions, work side by side in the factory where they turn out armoured cars. They have the common brotherhood of skilled craftsmen. The feeling of high speed production is put across well by good cutting. The commentator reminds his audience that this tyre-fitter's father sold lamps in the bazaar, this riveter's father knew nothing more mechanical than an ox-wagon. . . . It is a pity that we are not shown this side of Indian life. One cannot help feeling that the urgency of the factory, so effectively put across, cannot be as yet an outstandingly important aspect of life to the average Indian. Surely the old industries of India—the production of rice, hemp, cotton—are still vital.

It is most encouraging to see a film of high technical quality produced by an Indian Film Unit.

**Propaganda value.** The audience, particularly those members of it who work in factories, will be given more understanding of the Indian people and their way of living. Had it been possible to show the more general picture of Indian life it might have done an even better job.

**In the Rear of the Enemy.** Production: Soviet Children's Film Studio. Direction: Eugen Schneider.

**Subject:** This is the first full length Soviet film since the war to have been dubbed in English. It presents an extremely realistic picture of winter warfare which will give British people—civilian and military—a pretty graphic idea of what fighting is like in Arctic conditions. The story is simple enough, but full of interesting detail, and packed with suspense. A Soviet patrol of three men is sent out to reconnoitre the headquarters of the opposing troops (Finnish, but officered by Germans).

They reach the objective but are trapped. Two of them attempt to break back through the lines, but the third stays to give Soviet H.Q. the range for an artillery bombardment which destroys the Finnish guns. Soviet infantry follow up and annihilate the enemy. The three heroes are saved.

The story is one of simple courage and endurance based on that dynamic belief in a cause that is at the base of Russia's successes against the Fascist powers. It is a picture that could usefully be shown to British troops and to the Home Guard, for in addition to the natural excitement of the story there are many lessons in guerrilla tactics and the art of camouflage. The way the three Russians reconnoitre the enemy house before entering it is an object lesson in precaution, although one of them slips up badly later when he fails to observe a peculiar mound in the snow which conceals a Finnish soldier.

**Propaganda value:** The Red Army men and officers in the film are all extremely pleasant people, tough, efficient and human; you get a feeling that they know their job and nothing will stop them doing it. All in all, the film is very good propaganda not only for the Soviet Union, but for the cause of all anti-Fascist peoples.

**This is Colour.** Production: Strand Films for Imperial Chemical Industries. Producer: Basil Wright. Location Director: Jack Elliott. Camera: Jack Cardiff. Sound Track: Richard Addinsell, Dylan Thomas, Marjorie Fielding, Joseph MacLeod, Valentine Dyllal. Made in Technicolor.

**Subject:** The history, production and use of British dyes.

**Treatment:** This film is a sight for sore eyes. In a world which war is making drabber every day, with its camouflage, its khaki and its rationing of paint and wrappings, *This is Colour* gives us seventeen minutes of pure visual pleasure. The treatment fortunately is academic, thus coordinating what might have easily turned out to be a colour riot. It first discusses colour in general terms of landscape, of prisms, of sunlight and of a red rose in the moonlight. The discovery of new dyeing methods leads us on to experiments with dyes and then to their manufacture. In a superbly mysterious sequence, with the camera moving slowly across the dark paraphernalia of the dye factory with its flamboyant splashes of colour, we see the dyes being prepared and applied. The rollers turn, placing colour upon pattern and colour upon colour, reeling out yards of gaiety. So far the film has swung along, now it stops. A gabbling voice endeavours to review, in too neat poetry, the uses of colour in the world to-day. Scarlet tooth-brush is followed by green hot-water bottle, book-jackets by window curtains. This sequence is not only jarring, it also shows up one of the great deficiencies of the use of colour in film. The coloured image lingers in the eye for much longer than the black and white, and quick cutting produces an irritating blur.

But as if aware of this coloured hiccup, the film makes up for it by ending superbly. A voice says: "Now let all the colours dance", and the last sequence is a beautifully conceived movement of colour in abstract shapes. Poetry, movement and colour combine to enchant the eye and ear.

**Propaganda Value.** Perhaps exports are not of such vital importance nowadays. If this is so, the march of events have left the vital propaganda message of this film behind. But it still remains a good film and does its job superbly well.

**Mobile Engineers.** Production: Strand Film Co. Producer: Donald Taylor. Director: Michael Gordon. Camera: Bernard Browne. Script and Commentary: Reg. Groves. Played and spoken by men of the National Industrial Mobile Squad. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** The mobile squads of engineers who travel from factory to factory helping to train new workers, and who constantly evolve new methods of speeding up production.

**Treatment.** The film kicks off with a nicely directed dialogue scene in a railway carriage, in which we meet the gang of mobile engineers on their way to a new job. Unfortunately the rest of the film, which shows what they do at the factory, is commentated somewhat facetiously by one of them, and there is no further dialogue. As a result the film is a bit remote, although the activities of the engineers are clearly enough explained. The making of a new jig might surely have been treated with more warmth and excitement. The film is well edited and moves at a good pace.

**Propaganda value.** This film is chiefly an informational job. It tells us that there are these mobile engineers, shows us the problems they meet and

how they solve them. It impels no action or thought of action. If its theme had been the urgency of increased production and if the story of the engineers had been clearly presented as part only of the extra efforts needed from everyone, its propaganda value would have been excellent.

**Storing Vegetables Outdoors and Storing Vegetables Indoors.** M.O.I. for the Ministry of Agriculture. Production: Realist Film Unit. Direction: M. S. Thompson. Camera: A. E. Jenkins. Commentator: Roy Hay. Non-T.

**Subject:** These two films are part of a general series sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture. The first shows how to store potatoes and carrots in clamps. The second deals with the indoor storing of shallots, runner beans, onions, beets, haricot beans and tomatoes.

**Treatment:** The simple, straightforward technique adopted is admirable for this type of instructional film. The commentaries state the essentials and leave time for absorption. Photo-

graphy is very good and the direction doesn't wander into by-passes that have nothing to do with the matter in hand.

**Propaganda value:** As one of those unfortunate people who heartily detest gardening but have had an allotment pushed on to me, I found both films helpful in the extreme. Having been pushed to the point of actually putting stuff in I want to know what to do with it when it comes up. The films tell me that clearly and precisely, but I would complain that it all looks a darn sight easier than (to me) it actually is. The lad making the clamps, for instance, is blessed with soil that practically fights to get on his spade before it touches the ground. Not so with me or judging from what I have seen, with a lot of other sweating allotmenters.

Maybe in future films it would be a good idea to take these factors into account and deal with some of the difficulties that confront the average bloke who is trying to anticipate the threatened food shortage this coming winter.

## THE GOLD RUSH AGAIN

Robert Walthman reports on the revival of Chaplin's film in New York

Reprinted by courtesy of the *News Chronicle*

THE sudden sight of Charlie Chaplin in the *Gold Rush* on the canopy outside the Globe Theatre on Broadway stops you in your tracks. You haven't seen those words for sixteen or seventeen years and there's a better-sweet nostalgia in the look of them.

The crowd streaming past the theatre is largely made up of 1942 soldiers and bluejackets out for the night on Broadway. They can go into this and other theatres for little more than a quarter of the usual admission price. You notice a lot of them are going in.

"A revival with a new commentary written and spoken by Charles Chaplin and incidental music," the sign says. You remember the incidental music last time—the tinny but penetrating and tireless music that came from behind a musty felt curtain in the orchestra pit.

Golden days, innocent days, days when there was no blot upon the honourable trade of puerpandering, days when a man who spoke of retiring to a previously prepared position could only have meant he was going to live on his pension at Brighton.

You walk up a lush carpet and sit down in the darkness and there he is, the little tramp prospecting in Alaska. His movements are steadier now because Hollywood in its wonderful way has somehow reprinted the film so that it can be shown at the modern speed instead of with the old flicker.

And now the confident and cultivated voice of Mr. Charles Chaplin is breaking in with bits of talk. He has an actor's voice capable of ranting melodrama or simple pathos.

"Get out of here!" Black Larsen cried," Chaplin shouts at one point as he tells the story where he is watching on the screen; but at another point where heroine Georgia is visiting the lovelorn Charlie in his lonely shack Chaplin is saying softly, "There she stood, her loveliness lighting the room. . ."

He calls his image "the little fellow" through-

out the commentary. The Chaplin who is speaking is 53 and his hair is white, and he is looking back on his own past. Sometimes he sounds achingly fond of the picture and its people.

The acting of his leading lady, Georgia Hale, was often ludicrous by modern standards and her make-up would have driven Max Factor mad. But Chaplin loves her. When she first appears he speaks her name gently and tenderly, as though he were talking to himself.

And there is the saloon and Charlie's trousers are falling down as they fell down in 1925. 1925—Locarno and the League and the Washington Arms Conference.

Charlie starving in the cabin has cooked and is eating one of his boots, spitting the nails out going mad and with refinement and Big Jim is cured mad and they are rushing in and out of the cabin doors. 1925—"It ain't gonna rain no more" and the Dayton monkey trial; the year before the General Strike.

When the cabin was swinking over the precipice and Charlie opened the door and hung over the abyss from the knob there came from the modern Broadway audience that same high-pitched roar as used to drown out the music of the pianist.

You believed it had gone with Channel swimming and the Charleston; but it hasn't. It is still there in everyone's throat, waiting for Charlie Chaplin to awaken it.

You come from the theatre and there's a big lighted sign looking down Broadway. It says, WE MUST WORK AND FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES. The news sign is spelling out SUGAR RATIONING TO BEGIN MAY 5.

Two young Marines brush past and one is saying, ". . . If you can use machine-guns so much the better. . . ." There was the music of a tiny piano and there's the music of machine-guns. One generation may hear both and another may come which will hear neither.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 5

MAY 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London**, in association with **American Film Center, New York**.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1 GERRARD 4253

## THE WORLD IN ACTION

An estimate of some of the productions of Canada's National Film Board, which it is hoped will shortly be available for showing in this country

SO FAR the British public has had no opportunity of seeing the series of vigorous films on world strategy in war put out at two monthly intervals by the National Film Board of Canada. Although these films have a wide circulation in the U.S.A. as well as in Canada itself, they are prevented from being shown here owing to a clause in the Films Act (1938), under which they are classified as "alien" and are not eligible for quota. At the time of writing there would appear to be some hope of action being taken to get rid of this ridiculously anomalous situation, and it will therefore be of interest to analyse the purpose and technique of the films in question.

Known in Canada under the general title of *Canada Carries On* and in the U.S.A. as *The World in Action* series, the films represent a definite policy decision taken by the Canadian Government early in World War II. This decision arose from the realisation that the widest possible knowledge of world strategy and of the significance of each incident of the war in relation to the conflict as a whole, was likely to be one of the most valuable means of informational and morale propaganda, and was incidentally the best way of connecting the work of the Canadian home front with the world-horizons which it serves. The *Canada Carries On* series was accordingly evolved, and every other month the issue was devoted to a world survey of some aspect of the war. The series was furthermore designed for theatrical use and had to stand or fall on its box-office appeal.

The question of style was therefore of some importance, and after due consideration the National Films Commissioner (John Grierson) and the Producer in charge (Stuart Legg) decided that the series should be made in the same style as the *March of Time*. This decision has been kept to in each item so far seen in this country. Each film consists largely of visuals illustrating a commentary and accompanied by music and effects; occasional dialogue scenes are introduced, and titles are used to punch home points and to introduce a new angle in the story.

The style is well chosen for the purpose in hand, and frequently knocks spots off the *March of Time* at its own game. But the style is not so important as the content and the policy and thought which lie behind. The basic policy has already been mentioned, and the titles of the items are in themselves fairly illustrative of the policy—*The Battle for Oil*, *The Strategy of Metals*, *Food—Weapon of Conquest*, *This is Blitz*, etc.

Behind each of these items one can detect not merely the brain of the experienced propagandist but also certain attributes without which any widely-based film cannot be more than superficially convincing. These attributes are:—

- (i) Constant, intensive and imaginative research work;
- (ii) Close attention to history, to immediate strategic considerations, and to the various possibilities as regards the future;
- (iii) Elimination of makeshift visuals, and con-

centration on welding picture and commentary into an integral whole;

- (iv) A strong sense of screen journalism;
- (v) Fearlessness and forthrightness—both of which are impossible unless based on the preceding attributes.

The makers of these films would probably make no claim to have achieved perfection; nor does this article make that claim. But the value of the films as a stimulant both to thought and to action is such that they are worth detailed analysis.

It may be interesting to begin with a subject which has a definite parochial bias, and show how the producers deliberately related the parochial story to a vivid picture of its relation to the whole world. *The Strategy of Metals* begins with a vigorous, semi-poetic sequence taking us northward through Canada, past the cities and lakes and farms to a barren waste—the great Laurentian Shield—"a primeval monster, brooded over by an Arctic winter, with a summer three months long". This, says the commentator, as the camera moves grimly across a desolation of rock, snow, stunted trees, and frozen lakes, is one of democracy's greatest arsenals, for beneath its surface in abundance lie nearly all the metals on which our modern civilisation depends, and without which modern war could not be waged.

Note here that the attention of the audience is captured by the elements of suspense and surprise—not merely a technical trick, however, for it is valid whether you are already in possession of the facts or not.

The development of the Great Shield is then described, with emphasis laid on the fact that the mining centres depended and depend on air communications more than anything else.

So far we have had an impressive picture of this huge storehouse of essential metals being tapped—a picture which in itself gives us a heartening survey of United Nations resources as regards the supply of essential metals.

But now, suddenly, we are in British Guiana, with the ships loading up with a reddish earth called bauxite, without which aluminium cannot be made. In a few seconds the whole structure of the world markets for metals springs to life, and the Nazi position in this regard is vividly analysed.—Schacht buying in every market the metals without which Germany could not rearm... the panzer divisions, the Stukas, the submarines and pocket battleships all coming into existence from metals supplied from every quarter of the globe.

Note that we have now passed to a complete international picture, excellently illustrated by material from all quarters, including Germany. The menacing years of the 'Thirties gain a kind of perspective, and the stage is set.

But here comes a point of great technical interest. No attempt is made to build up anything out of the outbreak of the war. No time is wasted on the smashing of Poland. No dramas. This line is right; the film is being shown to us, who know we are at war and have lived through

the period. Here we want not history but a perspective on history. And we get it. The war is signalled simply by one thing which is strictly relevant to the story of metals—the Allied Blockade cutting Germany off from her supplies of raw materials.

A fast moving sequence builds up to an analysis of the point at which Europe cannot supply the weight of metal needed for the Nazi war machine, and the need for the mineral wealth of the Urals is shown to be one of the factors in the attack on the U.S.S.R. (just as in *The Battle for Oil*, the wells of the Caucasus are shown to play a similar part).

So the film comes full circle back to the great Laurentian Shield, with its metals, some old and some very new, pouring out the materials to win the war now and to build a new world of peace in the future.

Note that through forceful presentation of the facts, allied to an imaginative line of ideas expressed through visuals, *The Strategy of Metals* leaves its audience not merely stimulated but also having assimilated an important story; not a collection of incoherent facts, but a story which can be remembered and can clarify many hitherto disorganised news items read in the paper or heard on the radio. Note too that the film is, in trade parlance, "gripping entertainment".

*The Strategy of Metals* is but one example of the series. The other items do not necessarily follow its structure, but they all tell a coherent and dramatic story.

The events of World War II have in nearly all cases moved faster than the propagandists. But it is noteworthy that the series of films under review have kept pace with events better, probably, than any other films. This is chiefly because they are the result of hard thinking and careful planning; and it is only in the case of *War Clouds in the Pacific* that events have almost entirely outstripped the film, whose makers, during last summer, were hardly in a position to foresee the loss of Hongkong, Malaya, Singapore, and the attack on an unprepared Pearl Harbour.

Nevertheless *War Clouds in the Pacific* contains some remarkably interesting sequences. One, stressing the importance of the Aleutian Islands as the stepping stones between Alaska and Japan, leads into a final sequence depicting the great activity which is going on along the Western Seaboard of the New World—the air routes striking ever Northwards to the new bases of Alaska. Incidentally the animated maps in these sequences are striking examples of the use of this technique, which is also very much to the fore in *Battle for Oil* and *Strategy of Metals*. By using maps shaded to represent relief and also depicted as a segment of the globe rather than an arbitrary square from Mercator's Projection, they get an effect which is far more accurate as regards the sense of size and distance, and which has at times almost a realistic effect—the latter being heightened by superimposing moving clouds faintly in the background. In *War Clouds in the Pacific* the contrast between Mercator's Projection and the globe is very adroitly used to punch home the reason why the Aleutian Islands are of vital strategic importance.

The visuals of these Canadian films depend largely on the intelligent use of library material. It is indeed difficult to realise that nearly all the material used by the National Film Board is now available over here. Nor is it merely a question of availability; it is far more a question of

choice of material and the skilful cutting of it. In general it may be said that no commentary phrase in any of these Canadian films lacks an appropriate visual. In other words they have not forgotten that the picture must tell the story as well as, and in partnership with, the sound track.

Two especially notable examples of this use of brilliantly cut library material are to be seen in *Churchill's Island*, and *This is Blitz*—the former an early 1941 production and the latter completed early in 1942.

*Churchill's Island* was not made with an eye to circulation in Britain. It was rather made to bolster up Britain's reputation overseas at a time when it was sagging rather dangerously; and it certainly paints a picture of us that is more than flattering. It has a technical interest over here, firstly because it so largely draws on material from British propaganda films, and secondly because it shows the special uses to which that material can be put. The most exciting sequence in the film, for instance, is built up as follows:—The Nazis blast their way across Europe, France falls, the channel coasts are manned by Germans. Using sensational German newsreel material accompanied by a transcript of Hitler's speech threatening Britain with destruction, a fearsome tattoo of danger and aggression is beaten out, culminating in shots of E. Boats approaching Dover cliffs (alleged) and the huge cross-channel guns firing. But, as the last gun fires, the film cuts abruptly to the A.F.S. man from Watt's *Dover Front Line* leaning nonchalantly against a parapet and saying "We see the flash, count 60, and bang! there she is". This single shot demolishes the Nazi panoply in a manner which could not be achieved in any other way, particularly since there was such a lack of aggressive film material about England.

*This is Blitz* contains an amazing visual analysis of the Blitzkrieg technique, using Poland as an example. In broad outline it brings the chapter-headings of F. O. Miksche's book "Blitzkrieg" to life, and for this alone it must be of especial value in the U.S.A. today, where the citizenry are wanting to learn about war in real earnest. The one weakness of this film arises in its second reel (each of these films is two reels long) owing apparently to the lack of satisfactory counter-attacking material of a blitz variety from British sources. This will no doubt be very shortly remedied.

*This is Blitz* and its companion pictures *Forward Commandos* and *Food—Weapon of Conquest* are significant for special reasons other than those already mentioned. When the National Film Board first started its production activities it had to face the fact that the United States was still, in name at least, a neutral country. This rather difficult situation (particularly difficult because of the instinctive tendency for Canada and the U.S.A. to tie up together more and more) was ingeniously enough exploited by Grierson and Legg, as may be seen from the earlier films already referred to. But today the new batch of films makes it clear that the Film Board is now in a much freer position. The tendency to identify the national interests of the U.S.A. and Canada as a vital part of the War effort of the United Nations is a noteworthy aspect of recent productions.

In *Food—Weapon of Conquest*, for instance, there are two sub-titles which gain immensely by antithesis. One is a statement by Morgenthau of U.S.A. indicating that one of the major problems of New World agriculture must be

the supply of adequate food after the war to a Europe whose food supplies and transport systems will have been dislocated. The other (referring to the use of starvation or semi-starvation by the Nazis) is a quotation from Hitler in which he states that no action, however cruel, is unjustified in wartime if that action accelerates the conclusion of the war.

It is actually around these two themes that the food film is built up. Like *This is Blitz*; it contains scenes (all the more eloquent because they are so sparsely used) which depict in full horror the effects on ordinary people of the Nazi war system. Over against this it puts the enormous possibilities of a scientifically planned New World agriculture system acting on an international and co-operative basis.

There is no space further to detail the specific examples of the propaganda approach of the Canadian films. To sum up their main achievement, it is probably just to say that they are not merely interpreters of policy but actually the pacemakers of policy; and this remark is a tribute not merely to the makers of the films but to the far-sightedness of one of the most powerful of the United Nations, the democracy of Canada.

The fact that this series of films is having a considerable box-office success in the theatres of Canada and the U.S.A. makes it more than probable that they would have a similar success in this country. Their propaganda and informational value is certainly important enough to make it an urgent matter that the present regulations under the Films Act should be amended to enable them to achieve Exhibitors' quota, and thereby normal distribution on the screens of Britain.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SUMMER NUMBER

Articles on:—

CHILDREN AND FILMS

RUNNING A SPECIALIST THEATRE

WHITHER THE SHORT

and

NEWS FROM NEW YORK

6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.



# ROSTER OF M.O.I. FILMS, SEPTEMBER 1st, 1941<sup>c</sup> TILL 31st MARCH, 1942

We are indebted to the Ministry of Information for permission to publish the following lists of films and statistical analysis which brings up to date the lists published in our issue of October, 1941

## 1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

\* Indicates a five-minute film. Names in brackets do not appear on the credit titles of the films concerned. "O" indicates that a film has been sent overseas. "O.O." indicates primarily for overseas use, and "O.O.O." indicates exclusively for overseas use

TITLE	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	LENGTH Feet	RELEASE DATE		NOTES
					T.	N.T.	
Action	Technique	J. Carr and S. Box	Muriel Baker	788	—	3 42	Commentary by John Snagge.
Air Operations	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	(H. Watt)	1,875	—	2 42	An arrangement of Target for Tonight for non-T.
All Those in Favour	Paul Rotha Pd.	Paul Rotha	D. Alexander	2,053	—	1 42	O.O. With Arthur Mann.
*Arms from Scrap	Movietone	—	—	800	2 42	3 42	O. Commentary by Leslie Mitchell. Partly Newsreel compilation.
Atlantic Charter	Crown	—	—	1,779	—	10 41	O. Presentation film to President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Compiled from newsreel material.
*Battle of the Books	Paul Rotha Pd.	Paul Rotha	J. Chambers	681	10 41	1 42	O.O. With diagrams designed by the Isotype Institute.
Blood Transfusion	Paul Rotha Pd.	Paul Rotha	H. Nietner	3,401	—	2 42	For Medical audiences only. A popular non-T. version (1,766 ft.) under the same title is also available.
*Builders	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	P. Jackson	731	3 42	5 42	O. Introduced by John Hilton.
Building for Victory	Pathe	—	—	965	—	2 42	O.O. Newsreel compilation.
Chacun Son Dieu	Strand	—	R. Keene	1,138	—	—	O.O.O. Mainly Library compilation. French and Arabic versions only. Assoc. Producer: (Basil Wright).
Carrier Pigeon	See Winged Messengers.	(F. Sainsbury)	(Margaret Thomson)	392	—	3 42	Assoc. Producer (Edgar Anstey).
Compost Heap (Making A)	Realist	—	—	699	9 41	1 42	O.
*Corvettes	Spectator	—	I. Scott	99	—	1 42	O.
Country Women, The	Seven League	J. Page	—	1,249	—	1 42	O. Assoc. Producer: Paul Rotha.
Cultivation	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Margaret Thomson	1,094	—	1 42	O. Assoc. Producer: (Edgar Anstey).
*Dangers in the Dark	Public Relationship	—	R. Massingham and G. Wallace	582	10 41	1 42	O.
*Dig for Victory	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	—	603	10 41	1 42	O. Partly compiled from How to Dig and Cultivation. Assoc. Producer: (Edgar Anstey).
Empire's New Armies	Pathe	—	—	962	—	1 42	O.O. Newsreel compilation.
Ferry Pilot	Crown	I. Dalrymple	P. Jackson	2,779	2 41	5 42	O. Released through A.B.F.D.
*Few Oze, A Day, A	Paul Rotha Pd.	—	—	565	10 41	1 42	O. Designed by the Isotype Institute.
Fighting Allies	Movietone	—	Louise Birt	443	4 42	6 42	O.O.
*Filling the Gap	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	—	483	4 42	6 42	O. A Hallas-Batchelor Cartoon. Assoc. Producer: (Edgar Anstey). Music: E. H. Meyer.
Fire Guard	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Bell	2,256	—	2 42	O.O.
For Children Only	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Eldridge	662	—	3 42	O.O. Newsreel compilation.
Germany Calling	Spectator	—	—	220	12 41	1 42	O. Released by the Newsreel Assoc. Devised and edited by C. Ridley.
He Went to the Cupboard	Films of G. B. Verity	S. Box and J. Carr	A. Buchanan	768	—	1 42	With Joan Sternedale-Bennett and Hay Petrie.
*H.M. Minelayer	Verity	—	H. Cass	736	9 41	1 42	O.
H.M. Navies Go to Sea	Movietone	—	—	979	—	1 42	O.O. Newsreel compilation.
*Hospital Nurse	G.B.S.S.	—	—	713	11 41	2 42	O.
Hot on the Spot	Films of G. B. Strand	—	F. Searle	902	—	1 42	A.S. Ministry of Food.
How to Thrash	Strand	R. Bond	A. Buchanan	1,033	—	1 42	O. Assoc. Producer: Edgar Anstey.
Jane Brown Changes her Job	Verity	S. Box and J. Carr	H. Cooper	791	—	1 42	O.
Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat	Strand	—	R. Bond	849	—	2 42	Commentary by Wilfred Pickles. Assoc. Producer: Edgar Anstey.
*Knights of St. John	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Lewis	644	2 42	4 42	O.
*Land Girl	Strand	D. Alexander	J. Page	747	2 42	4 42	O.
Listen to Britain	Crown	I. Dalrymple	H. Jennings	1,685	4 42	4 42	O. Released through British Lion.
Films of G. B. Men of Tomorrow	Technique	S. Box and J. Carr	A. Travers	890	—	1 42	O.O.O. Commentary by Sir Gilbert Scott.
*Mobile Engineers	Strand	D. Taylor	M. Gordon	685	3 42	5 42	O.
More Eggs from your Hens	Swiss Services	—	J. Rogers	973	—	1 42	O. Assoc. Producer: (Edgar Anstey)
*Naval Operations	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Tharpe	799	12 41	3 42	O. Library compilation. Diagrams by Frank Rodker.
*Newspaper Train	Realist	—	L. Lye	542	1 42	4 42	O.
*100,000,000 Women	Soviet Film Agency	—	—	848	2 42	4 42	O. Library compilation.
Out and About	G.B.I.	—	S. Irving	805	—	1 42	O.O.O. Commentary by Sir Harold Gillies. In Technicolor. A short addition (330ft.) is titled Plastic Surgery.
Plastic Surgery in Wartime	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	2,328	—	—	O.
Post 23	Strand	(D. Taylor)	R. Bond	926	—	1 42	O.
R.A.F. in Action	Movietone	—	—	937	—	1 42	O.O. Newsreel compilation.
*Royal Observer Corps	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	G. Gunn	666	12 41	3 42	O.
*Rush Hour	20th Cent. Fox	(E. Black)	A. Asquith	554	—	1 42	O.
Storing Vegetables Indoors	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Margaret Thomson	1,138	—	3 42	O. Commentary by Roy Hay. Assoc. Producer: Edgar Anstey.
Storing Vegetables Outdoors	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Margaret Thomson	785	—	3 42	O. Commentary by Roy Hay. Assoc. Producer: Edgar Anstey.
*Tale of Two Cities	Crown	—	—	688	2 42	3 42	O. Commentary by Colin Wills. Compiled by John Monck from library material.
They Met in London	Paul Rotha Pd.	—	—	1,047	—	1 42	O.O. Produced in association with British Paramount News.
*Venture, Adventure	Crown	I. Dalrymple	C. Hasse	679	11 41	2 42	O.
*Victory Over Darkness	Realist	—	—	523	3 42	5 42	O. Based on a film of the same name prepared by St. Dunstan's.
*War in the East	Shell	(E. Anstey)	(N. Baxter)	635	12 41	3 42	O. Maps only. With J. Horrabrin.
Wavell's 30,000	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	J. Monck	4,309	3 42	—	O. Largely compiled from A.F.U. and newsreel material. Released by M.G.M.

TITLE	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	LENGTH Feet	RELEASE DATE		NOTES
					T.	N.T.	
Way to Plough (A)	Verity	S. Box and J. Carr	C. Hornby	1,431	—	12 41	O. Commentary by Frederick Grisewood, Assoc. Producer; Edgar Anstey.
*Winged Messengers	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	675	6 41	9 41	Commentary by Colin Wells. Issued as N.T. Film under the title Carrier Pigeon.
Winter on the Farm	Green Park	—	R. Keene	1,347	—	2 42	Assoc. Producer; Edgar Anstey.
*W.R.N.S.	Strand	D. Taylor	I. Moffat	746	11 41	1 42	O.
W.V.S.	Verity	S. Box and J. Carr	Louisa Birt	2,034	—	2 42	O. A slightly shorter British version omitting the scenes of Mary Welch and Lady Reading has been prepared.
Youth Takes a Hand	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	1,125	—	1 42	O.

## 2 NEWSREEL TRAILERS

TITLE OR THEME	PROD. UNIT	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT CONCERNED	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
Empty Houses	Pathe	Home Security	9 41	
Address Clearly	Universal	G.P.O.	9 41	
Fuel Economy (Heating)	Films of G.B.	Mines	12 41	
Post Early	Pub. Pics.	G.P.O.	12 41	
Food Advice Centre	Verity	Food	21 41	
Swinerton	Pub. Pics.	Supply	12 41	Regional Distribution only.
Sneezing	Strand	Health	1 42	With Cyril Fletcher
Fuel Economy (Cooking)	Films of G.B.	Mines	1 42	
A.T.S.	N.S.S.	W.O.	1 42	Regional Distribution only.
Milk	Pub. Pics.	Food	1 42	
Fuel Economy (Hot Water)	Films of G.B.	Mines	2 42	
Paper Salvage	Films of G.B.	Supply	3 42	

## 3 COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS	NOTES
This is a Searchlight	495	20 11 41	
This is a Special Constable	815	20 11 41	
This is a Barrage Balloon	672	20 11 41	
These are Paratroops	1,000	9 12 41	War Office Material
This is an A.R.P. Warden	987	11 12 41	
This is an Anti-Aircraft Gun	600	10 11 41	
Our Indian Soldiers	525	12 2 42	Material from a Day with the Indian Army
Self Help in Food	1,175	12 2 42	
These are London Firemen	1,030	—	
With Our African Troops—Early Training	266-16 mm. only	12 2 42	African Material
With Our African Troops—On Active Service	708	12 2 42	African Material
Soldiers' Comforts from Uganda	755	12 2 42	

## 4 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

NUMBER OF FILMS DELIVERED					COMBINED FOOTAGE OF FILMS DELIVERED				
Year ending Year ending Seven months TOTAL Aug. 31, 1940 Aug. 31, 1941 ending Mar. 31, 1942					Year ending Year ending Seven months TOTAL Aug. 31, 1940 Aug. 31, 1941 ending Mar. 31, 1942				
5-Minute Films	7	42	24	73	5-Minute films	4,616	29,970	14,490	49,076
5-Minute Films acquired from other sources.	1	6	7	14	5-Minute films acquired from other sources	458	3,420	4,884	8,762
Films for general T. use	13	9	4	26	Films for general T. use	16,426	14,290	4,733	35,449
Films mainly for T. use overseas	2	2	5	9	Films mainly for T. use overseas	2,107	5,102	4,733	11,942
Films for general non-T. use	—	45	20	65	Films for general non-T. use	—	42,987	19,743	62,730
Films mainly for non-T. use overseas	—	4	9	13	Films mainly for non-T. use overseas	—	3,225	15,252	18,477
GRAND TOTAL	23	108	69	200	GRAND TOTAL	23,607	98,994	63,835	186,436
Trailers	3	14	12	29	Trailers	510	2,380	1,500	4,390
Colonial Film Unit Productions	3	8	18†	29	Colonial Film Unit Productions	3,980	10,149	13,362	27,491

† Includes 3 films available on 16 mm. only.

## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

The increasing strain of civil defence duties has in no way lessened the interest taken in the scientific films shown during the third session by the **Aberdeen Scientific Film Club**. True, membership this year was not quite as large as in the preceding session, but this can be accounted for almost entirely by the shift of personnel due to war conditions. The greatest difficulties encountered were in getting first class talkie films. The club started off by showing programmes of the best films which could be procured, without any padding from comedy or historical films, with the consequence that the curtailed supply was to a certain extent reflected in the programmes presented. Nevertheless the marks awarded by the audiences, who are trenchant critics, seldom fell below seventy per cent on the average. How long this can be maintained is a question not for the club promoters but for the film producers. The effect of mechanised warfare, and an appreciation of the significance of machines, has evolved an audience which will absorb films like *Distillation* and *Hydraulics* with relish, but will display only passing interest in pseudo-biological films. Real teaching and information take precedence every time over anything which savours of "talking down to the audience".

At the forthcoming Conference on the Scientific Film the Club will be represented by Dr. Archibald Clow, lecturer in Chemistry in the University. One of the things which it is hoped will come out of this Conference is the realization that the film is an excellent medium for the presentation of experimental set-ups, which are expensive and from which nothing is gained by having to prepare the material at, say, yearly intervals, for presentation to a fresh audience or race of students. Industry, too, is an almost unexplored field for *good* films explanatory of industrial processes. If the fractionation of oil can be made interesting and intelligible by a film like *Distillation*, what is to prevent us having a series of similar films illustrative of industry as a whole? The youth of practically every community has in its neighbourhood a selective industrial environment, and has little opportunity of learning about industry as a whole. If we are to have a planned economy, it is just as important for the London youth to know about the quarrying of the Aberdeen granite, of which the Embankment is built, as for the Aberdeen youth to appreciate the significance of Portland cement.

The **London Scientific Film Society** held the fourth and final performance of the season on May 16th in the Imperial Institute Cinema, when the programme included *This is Colour*, Imperial Chemical Industry's new technicolor film on dyes; *Boulder Dam*, the United States Government's record of the Colorado River project, and *Galapagos*, Dartington Hall Film Unit's famous document on animal evolution, the production of which was assisted by the Zoological Society. A commentary to the last film was spoken by Dr. Julian Huxley who answered a number of good questions from a lively audience. This has probably been the Society's most successful season since its inception.

MAY 1st, '41—

MAY 1st, '42



### FIVE MINUTERS

Visit from Canada

News Train

Victory Over Darkness

Filling The Gap

Work Party

### NON-THEATRICALS

(1 Reel)

Living With Strangers

When The Pie Was Opened

Canadian Fighters

Cultivation

Storing Vegetables Indoors

Storing Vegetables Outdoors

Compost Heap

Hedging

Ditching

Good Value

Canada in London

### SPECIALS

Plastic Surgery in Wartime

(Three Reels Technicolor)

Plastic Surgery

(Supplement 1 Reel)

Goodbye Yesterday

(2 Reels)

The Harvest Shall Come

(4 Reels)

### REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# THE WAR—A PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

This time the common man in all lands will build a new world, says HENRY A. WALLACE\*

Reprinted by courtesy of *Reynolds News*

THIS is a fight between a slave world and a free world.

Just as the United States in 1862 could not remain half slave and half free, so in 1942 the world must make a decision for complete victory one way or the other.

As we begin the final stages of this fight to the death between the free and the slave world, it is worth while refreshing our minds about the march of freedom for the common man.

The idea of freedom is derived from the Bible with its extraordinary emphasis on the dignity of the individual. The prophets of the Old Testament were the first to preach social justice.

But that which was sensed many years before Christ was not given powerful political expression until our nation was formed as a federal union 150 years ago; even then, the march of the common people had only begun.

Most of them were unable to read and write, and there were no State schools to which all children could go. Men and women cannot be really free until they have plenty to eat and time and ability to read, to think and to talk things over.

If we measure freedom by standards of nutrition, education and self-government, we might rank the United States and certain nations of Western Europe very high. But this is unfair to other nations where education has become widespread only in the past 20 years.

Russia, for example, has changed from an illiterate to a literate nation within one generation, and in the process Russia's appreciation of freedom has increased tremendously.

Everywhere reading and writing are accompanied by industrial progress and industrial progress inevitably brings a strong Labour Movement.

Fundamentally, there are no backward peoples, lacking in mechanical sense. Russians, Chinese and Indians all learn to read and write and operate machines just as well as your children or my children.

Everywhere the common people are on the march. By millions, they are learning to read and write, learning to think together, to use tools. They are learning to think together in Labour Movements, some of which may be extreme or impracticable at first, but which will settle down to serve effectively the interests of the common man.

In the countries where the ability to read and write has been acquired recently—62 per cent of the people of the world are still illiterate—where people have had no long experience of governing themselves on the basis of their own thinking, it is easy for demagogues to prostitute the mind of the common man to their own base ends.

Such a demagogue may get financial help from some person of wealth.

The demagogue is the curse of the modern

world; of all demagogues, the worst are those who are financed by wealthy men who sincerely believe their wealth is likely to be safer if they can hire men with political "it" to change the signpost and to lure the people back into the most degraded slavery.

The march of freedom of the last 150 years has been a long drawn-out people's revolution.

In this great revolution of the people there were the American Revolution of 1775, the French Revolution of 1792, the Latin-American Revolution of the Bolivarian era, the German Revolution of 1848, and the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Each spoke for the common man in terms of blood on the battlefield.

Some went to excess, but the significant thing is that people broke their way to the light. More of them learned to think and work together.

The people's revolution aims at peace, not at violence, but if the rights of the common man are attacked, it unleashes the ferocity of the she-bear who has lost a cub.

The people are on the march towards even fuller freedom than the most fortunate people of the world have hitherto enjoyed.

No Nazi counter-revolution will stop it. The common man will smoke the Hitler stooges out into the open in the United States, in Latin-America, and in India. He will destroy their influence. No Laval or Mussolini will be tolerated in a free world.

The people, in their millennial and revolutionary march forward, are manifesting here on earth the dignity that is in every human soul. They hold as their credo Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, which are the very core of the revolution for which the United Nations have taken their stand.

We in the United States may think there is nothing very revolutionary about freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom from fear of secret police.

But when we begin to think about the significance of freedom from want for the average man, then we know that the revolution of the past 150 years has not been completed either here in the United States or in any other nation in the world. We know this revolution cannot stop until freedom from want has actually been attained.

We failed in our job after the World War. We did not know how to go about building an enduring world-wide peace. We lacked the nerve to follow through and prevent German rearmament. We did not build a peace treaty on the fundamental doctrines of the people's revolution. We did not strive to create a world where there could be freedom from want for all peoples.

But by our very errors we have learned much; and after this war we will be in a position to

utilise our knowledge and build a world which will be economically, politically, and, I hope, spiritually sound.

Modern science, which is a by-product and essential part of the people's revolution, has made it technologically possible to see that all peoples throughout the world get enough to eat.

Peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China and Latin-America—not merely in the United Nations, but also in Germany, Italy and Japan.

Some have spoken of "the American Century." I say that the century we are entering, which will come into being after this war, can be, and must be, the century of the common man.

Perhaps it will be America's opportunity to support the freedoms and duties by which the common man must live.

Everywhere the common man must learn to build his own industries with his own hands.

Everywhere the common man must learn to increase his productivity so that he and his children can eventually pay to the world community all that they have received.

No nation will have the God-given right to exploit other nations. The older nations will have the privilege of helping the younger nations to get started on the path of industrialisation, but there must be neither military nor economic imperialism.

Modern science must be released from German slavery.

The international cartels that serve American greed and the German will to power must go.

Cartels in the peace to come must be subject to international control for the common man as well as being under the control of the respective home governments.

In this way, we can prevent the Germans again building a war machine while we sleep.

With international monopoly pools under control, it will be possible for inventions to serve all people, instead of only a few.

When peace comes, the citizen again will have the supreme duty of sacrificing a lesser welfare for the greater interest of general welfare.

Those who write the Peace must think of the whole world. There can be no privileged peoples.

If we really believe we are fighting for a people's peace, the rest becomes easy. Production? Yes, it will be easy to get production without strikes or sabotage, production with whole-hearted co-operation.

I need say little about our duty to fight. It is true American youth hates war with a holy hatred. But because of that fact and because Hitler and the German people stand as the very symbol of war, we shall fight with tireless enthusiasm until war and the possibility of war has been removed from this planet.

(continued on p. 78)

\* Vice-President of the United States



## War—A People's Revolution

(continued from p. 77)

I am convinced that the Summer and Autumn of 1942 will be the time of supreme crisis for us all.

Hitler, like a prizefighter who realises he is on the verge of a knock-out, is gathering all his remaining forces for one last desperate blow.

We may be sure Hitler and Japan will co-operate—perhaps an attack by Japan against Alaska and our North-West coast, at a time when German transport planes will be shuttled across from Dakar to furnish the leadership and stiffening for a German uprising in Latin-America.

We must especially prepare to stifle fifth columnists in the United States who will try, not merely to sabotage our war plants but, infinitely more important, our minds.

We must be prepared for the worst kind of fifth column work in Latin-America, much of it operating through the agency of governments with which the United States is at present at peace.

When I say this, I recognise that the peoples both of Latin-America and of those nations which are supporting the agencies by which the fifth columnists work, are overwhelmingly on the side of the democracies.

## FILM SOCIETY NEWS

The Manchester and Salford Film Society reports that the result of their questionnaire on programmes to their members has established that:—(a) Members of the Manchester and Salford Film Society have a preference for Soviet films; (b) Members of the Manchester and District Film Institute Society have a preference for French films; (c) The most popular films shown during the past season were *La Grande Illusion* and *We From Kronstadt*; (d) The films most desired for the coming season are *La Bête Humaine*, *Alexander Nevski*, *L'Esclave Blanc* and *The Rich Bride*. The joint Manchester Societies are considering the possibilities of a joint summer session consisting of three programmes in association with the official representatives of three of the United Nations—France, Czechoslovakia and China. The latter country will be represented by Iven's *100,000,000* and details of the other programmes will be announced later. A 16 mm. programme of Soviet shorts is also planned.

As originally planned the Belfast Film Institute Society's season was to have ended in early April, but so unexpectedly favourable have conditions been that it was decided to hold an extra show. It seemed the obvious policy to make this a special Russian show, so *Musical Story* was booked, with a supporting programme of Russian shorts, some actualities, others cartoons. The one non-Russian film of the programme was a revival of Len Lye's *Colour Box*. With this, the eighth show of the season, the Society ended its Repertory series. The Annual General Meeting follows in June and at this it is the Society's custom to show a film classic on sub-standard film. This year an early Russian silent film will be screened.

## NEWS & SPECIALISED THEATRE ASSOCIATION SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR MAY/JUNE 1942

	Week commencing		Week commencing
Aeronautics		Poles Weigh Anchor	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 17th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	June 14th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	17th	Poplar Trappers	
An Airman's Letter to His Mother	24th	Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	May 17th
The News Theatre, Nottingham		Plane Sailing	
Architects of England		The News Theatre, Manchester	June 7th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	May 24th	Play the Game	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	June 14th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 31st
Bravest of the Brave		Playing with Neptune	
Eros Theatre, W.1	May 22nd	The News Theatre, Nottingham	June 7th
Russian Scenes and Songs		The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 24th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	June 7th	Sage Brush and Silver	
Bridge Across the Skies		The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	June 7th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	June 1st	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	June 7th
Child Psychology	June 1st	San Francisco	May 24th
The News Theatre, Leeds	May 24th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 24th
City of Conquest		Seeing is Believing	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	31st	The News Theatre, Nottingham	17th
City of Ships		Self Control	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	June 14th	The Classic Cinema, South Croydon	28th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	17th	Servant of Mankind	31st
English Summer		The News Theatre, Nottingham	31st
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	June 7th	Soldiers of the Sky	
Forgotten Victory	June 7th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	7th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	May 31st	Soviet Songs and Dances	7th
Foundations of the Earth		The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	7th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	May 31st	Snow Dogs	
Free France	24th	The News Theatre, Leeds	May 25th
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	24th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	24th
The Classic Cinema, South Croydon		Speaking of the Weather	
Parades of Industry	June 14th	The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	31st
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	June 14th	Symphonic in Snow	
Gateway to the Sky	May 31st	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	June 1st	The News Theatre, Leeds	June 1st
Glacier Trails		The News Theatre, Birmingham	7th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	June 14th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	7th
Happiest Man on Earth		The Fox Hunt	June 7th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	May 17th	Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	31st
Hedgerows	17th	The World's News Theatre, W.2	31st
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th	The Great Train Robbery	June 7th
Hermit of Oklahoma	31st	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	June 7th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	31st	The Hockey Champ	May 24th
The News Theatre, Bristol	June 14th	Eros Theatre, W.1	May 24th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	May 17th	The Jungle	17th
Historical Highlights of American History	25th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	17th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th
The News Theatre, Leeds	17th	Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	24th
Joining Forces	June 7th	Thinking Aloud	June 7th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	June 7th	The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	June 7th
Joining Forces	May 17th	Town and Gown	June 7th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th	Tyneside	May 24th
Joining Forces	14th	Village in India	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	31st
Joining Forces	June 7th	West of the Rockies	7th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	7th	Western Isles	May 24th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	18th	Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	13th	Western Isles	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th	Victoria Station News Theatre, S.W.1	June 7th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th	Work Mates	May 17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	May 17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	World Garden	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The News Theatre, Manchester	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th	The News Theatre, Bristol	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	17th	The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	24th	FEATURE REVIVALS	
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	31st	A Musical Story	
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	31st	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	May 17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	June 14th	Anthony Adverse	21st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic, Hendon, N.W.14	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Conquest	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic, Southampton	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Flight Command	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic Cinema, South Croydon	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Gaslight	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic, Hendon, N.W.1	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	General Suvarov	31st
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	June 9th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	14th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Hudson Bay	May 24th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	24th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Love on the Dole	28th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	28th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Marx Brothers Go West	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Pastor Hall	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic Cinema, S. Croydon	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Quiet Wedding	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Seventh Heaven	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic Cinema, S. Croydon	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	Spring Parade	17th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	14th	The Classic, Hendon, N.W.1	17th

# THE PROPAGANDA VALUE OF ACHIEVEMENT

EDITH MANVELL

WHEN people are asked to make sacrifices for the war effort the result is very like giving up sugar in tea during the Lenten fast. Those who give up a little luxury are often the most complacent about their contribution to war-time economy and the call for "austerity". They seem to have no sense of proportion. The same may be said of the national propaganda policy: it is a very miscellaneous assortment, technically on the same level as commercial advertising. It appeals to the instincts of fear or personal vanity; if it tries to arouse a sense of patriotism, it often does so by a negative approach. The effect wears off in a very short time; slogans and clichés soon become ineffectual and the lack of co-ordination and purposeful drive leaves one with the feeling that things are not so vitally urgent.

In reaction to this vague perception of what total war means, those men and women who know that defeat would involve the loss of hope in a better future, feel compelled to keep up a constant stream of criticism most of which is justified. It is understandable that the most active and socially-minded people are more easily discouraged by constant frustration in their desire to achieve something than the passive-minded people. This war has already proved that inactivity leads to despondency sooner than hardship and danger. The Nazis know this and have applied this insidious weapon against their intended victims. Criticism is necessary, and it is often effective as a spur to action but it should not make us feel that nothing will ever go right. A more positive attitude must be taken, even though the war situation looks grim. We want to hear about achievements, not only on the battle front but on the home front as well.

In the U.S.S.R. great achievements and hard work in industry receive the honour of public recognition. In this country, courage in the face of great physical danger, in battle or in civil defence, is publicly recognised, but toil and sweat day after day and week after week pass unnoticed. We hear of things that go wrong, of strikes and absenteeism, but rarely of the endurance and effort which are an example of a dynamic will to victory.

As a statement of the much demanded war aims, the principles expressed in the Atlantic Charter will have to suffice for the present; they at least allow for varying interpretation which avoids provoking any violent dissension. But a mere expression of ideals cannot inspire a nation with a dynamic faith and will to victory. We need the influence of great leadership and exemplary behaviour. And the example must not be limited to those who rule in high places but must be drawn from amongst the men and women with whom we work and come in daily contact. During the heavy raids, it was the leadership of those who were on the spot helping their neighbours which kept up the morale of the people, and not the official organisations at distant headquarters. It is the same spirit which has made the U.S.S.R. and China resist the most ruthless aggression. We need a propaganda policy which will recognise and encourage this spirit that makes possible

the sustained efforts of the people working in industry, on the land, and in the services. It must be made more real to us and not cheapened by a certain type of journalistic sensationalism. We must present to the world the example of everyday human achievement of the common people which by its sincerity and determination commands respect and admiration.

It is in this that Documentary films can do some of their greatest work. Through this medium the relationship between the individual and the forces at work in the world to-day are seen in terms of human values and not as the statistician, the economist or the mass observer sees them. Too few films with a propaganda purpose base their appeal on those qualities which inspire loyalty, a desire for mutual service and maintenance of the decencies of life. Newsreel types of film, instructional and recruiting films, and films which merely record events are useful in their way, but there have been far too few true documentaries. We need a truer perspective of democracy as a whole, striving to attain those ideals which at present seem blurred and intangible. Faith in the deeper spiritual values which have inspired mankind is the ultimate driving force to action.

S.O.S. *for copies of*  
**WORLD FILM NEWS**

We should like to buy for 2s. 6d. each, copies of the following numbers of

**WORLD FILM NEWS**

No. 1. Vol. I  
No. 4. Vol. I  
No. 5. Vol. II

*Please send copies to*

**D.N.L., 34 SOHO SQUARE  
LONDON, W.1**

*It's been going on for years . . .*

**E**ACH week renews the interest which readers feel in their copy of the "Kinematograph Weekly".

This interest is nothing new. It's been going on for years, and the reasons are to be found quite easily in the way in which the "Kinematograph Weekly" gets down to "brass tacks", and presents them in a newsy way which never becomes "spiky".

This week, next week, for as long as there is a "Kinematograph Weekly", its extensive field-work will ensure a complete recording of current and future happenings in the artistic and technical progress of Kinematography.

**Kine**matograph  
**WEEKLY**

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2

## CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR,  
*Documentary News Letter.*

DEAR SIR,

THERE are four cinemas in the district where I live. This week the four main features are *H. M. Pulham, Esq.*, *Keep 'Em Flying*, *Ladies in Retirement*, *You'll Never Get Rich*. Of these only one film—*Keep 'Em Flying*—is remotely connected with the war and that in a frivolous and pointless way. All the other films, so I am told, are good; they are all American, made before America came openly into the war, and so do nothing but instil that feeling of pre-war complacency among thousands who flock to see them. *H. M. Pulham, Esq.*, is one of those romantic dramas: *Keep 'Em Flying* has comedy, songs, romance, and aviation thrills—guaranteed to drive away any wartime blues: *Ladies in Retirement* is a murder thriller, and lastly *You'll Never Get Rich* promises to be a mixture of chorus girls and Army camps. These are the films I've got to choose from if I want to go to the pictures next week. Five minutes of newsreel is the nearest I will get to the war.

Before the war while feature films lived in a make-believe world of their own, documentary film makers, particularly in this country, were trying to break down the complacent, airy-fairy attitude that was existing everywhere and showing the public something of themselves—what they were really like, not what they thought or hoped they were like.

By September 1939, documentary films had achieved some success and were able, with the help of the Ministry of Information, to change over to wartime needs and conditions in a minimum of time and with the minimum of fuss. The war presented new problems and the use of the film was one way to solve them. But the feature film makers still went on making their films behind their smug, bogus mask. For some time after the outbreak of war there was little or no sign in feature films that their makers were aware of the drastic change in conditions. They carried on working out their love affairs, blaring out their musical comedies, and solving their mystery thrillers. It wasn't until after Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain that the possibility of war as a subject for feature films was at all fully realised. The M.O.I. five-minuters were coming regularly each week but only to fill in a gap in the programme. The war didn't go very well for us for a long while. People became more and more depressed and the cinema became more and more a means of escape.

The war has been on for nearly three years and we are only just beginning to come out of our coma. *The Foreman Went to France*, *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*, *The Day Will Dawn*—these films have been released during the past month and the Trade papers are preparing us for more.

This may or may not be a change in propaganda policy but whatever it is we are at last beginning to realise the potentialities of the feature film as a propaganda medium. The feature film cannot help but be the mainstay of any normal cinema programme and the sooner it is geared to the war effort the better. The feature film industry must be governed by a definite propaganda policy. The feature film industry must become part of, not a distraction from the war effort.

Yours etc.  
"FILMGOER."



In future The Strand Film Company will be working in conjunction with British National Films Ltd. Strand Films will continue to function as a separate production unit, and the same Technical Staff will carry on.

The British National Studios at Elstree will be Strand Films production headquarters.



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

New address:—

Offices: 1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

TEL: GERRARD 6304/5.

Studios: BRITISH NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

TEL: ELSTREE 1644.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JUNE, 1942

## CONTENTS

COMPLACENCY—TWO VARIETIES	81
NOTES OF THE MONTH	82
THE DOCUMENTARY IDEA—1942 <i>by John Grierson</i>	83
A CANADIAN EXPERIMENT <i>by Donald W. Buchanan</i>	87
FILMS AND SCIENCE	88
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	90
POST-WAR CULTURE	91
CORRESPONDENCE	91
FILM SOCIETY NEWS	93
NEWS AND SPECIALISED THEATRES	94
FILM LIBRARIES	96

VOL 3 NO 6

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## COMPLACENCY—TWO VARIETIES

WISHFUL thinking and complacency are still amongst the most dangerous elements in Britain to-day. Far too many people are accepting the day-to-day war situation without making any intellectual or imaginative effort to view that situation in some sort of perspective. Mental laziness, *laissez faire*, lack of real energy, lack of a sense of responsibility—all those elements, in fact, which caused the failure of democracy as a positive force in the armistice of 1918–1939, are still far too much in evidence. Not enough people, for instance, are comparing the success of the air offensive in Europe with the difficulties that are likely to arise from the intensification of the U-boat campaign in the Atlantic.

This complacency takes various forms, however. While, for instance, the second-fronters claim that the war can be finished quickly, those who oppose the second front produce their own sort of complacency by preparing for a long war without any real sense of the issues involved.

But whatever the form which this dangerous attitude of mind may take, its implication is quite clear. People do not think hard enough. But the men and women in the factories and in the mines, no less than in the Forces, are doing magnificent work; and it is amongst them, particularly the factory workers, that a good deal of hard thinking is taking place, as may be judged by the breakdown of the electoral truce.

Nevertheless, taking the country as a whole, there seems to be a real danger of people blindly accepting various broadcasts, films and newspaper articles, which in their cumulative effect add up to the impression that the Axis is already beaten, that it is only a matter of time, and that the only question is—how long? In a recent interview the head of Bomber Command gave the impression (intentionally or unintentionally) that the strategy of this war is to be determined by bombing, which will probably take a very long time but will in the end be the decisive factor. At a time when, despite the lack of published figures, there is considerable disquiet regarding the sinking of the United Nations' ships, particularly in the Atlantic, a one-sided picture of this sort is just the sort of thing which leads to unthinking complacency.

On a parallel with complacency about the immediate war situation there runs a second complacency, which is equally dangerous, a complacency in regard to the post-war period. There are two schools of thought. The first, which although less powerful than a year ago, still exists, particularly in Tory circles, claims that our job is to win the war now and not bother about the peace until it arrives. The second is represented by a large number of well-meaning and well-staffed reconstruction and planning committees, which, each in their own way, are engaged on drawing up a great variety of blueprints

for the world after the war. Between these two extremes the bulk of the citizenry continue to vacillate. Too many people are failing to realise that the new world which we all hope and intend to build after the war will not come without a hard struggle. Too few people are planning the concrete action without which the blueprints of the planners will not be worth the paper.

It is quite certain that what happens after the war is most intimately related with what is happening now. In order to win the battle against the Axis by military and economic means, each nation is being forced to make revolutionary changes in its social and economic way of life. In this country an increasing degree of nationalisation is being forced on reluctant vested interests; but it is only too frequently being done in terms which make it clear that those interests expect to be in a position to get their grip back soon after hostilities cease. The new scheme regarding the mining industry is an example of this. Yet the action taken now has a direct bearing on the post-war problem, and people must realise this.

To use economic jargon, it is vital that the post-war period should be geared to the needs of the consumer; and the consumer means you and me and all the ordinary people of this country. Therefore the problem is our own and without our action it will not be solved, except in a negative and reactionary sense.

There is one ultimate danger to this country, and that is the danger of relaxation and *laissez-faire* when hostilities cease. On the day when some sort of armistice is signed we shall need to go on working just as hard, if not harder, if the enormous sacrifice and misery of the war are to be worth while. There will be so many problems. For instance, the feeding of all Europe and much of the East—a problem which will be in the hands of the British Commonwealth and the United States. This problem will in itself be a continuation of the war problem, but it will carry with it the organisational needs for a new Europe. It will be an international problem and bound up with the home front problem of each of the United Nations.

It is not too much to claim that part of our war effort now should be the planning of a great propaganda campaign that can swing into action on a new front the moment hostilities cease. More than this; a certain proportion of our propaganda effort from now on should be devoted to making people realise that they must get used to the idea of continued effort of a very active and hard-working and positive nature in the interests of the peace-time world which is coming. We hope that the Ministry of Information is making plans to this effect and, as far as film propaganda is concerned, the sooner these plans are put into operation the better. Meantime, the situation in Libya is doing much to stop one sort of complacency.



# NOTES OF THE MONTH

## An Important Article

WE DRAW special attention to the article by John Grierson on the opposite page, in which he discusses not only the present developments of the documentary idea but also the duties and responsibilities of propagandists in general. We believe it to be a statement of the utmost importance to all those who are concerned with the use of the various media of public persuasion, both as regards the present crisis and as regards the future crises which the first years of peace will bring.

## Sponsors

NOTHING THROWS the abysmal wastefulness of the advertising film into sharper relief than a survey of the activities of those organisations who engage in the production of films as part of their public relations. In peace-time, interests such as Shell and the British Commercial Gas Association regularly produced films which redounded to their credit, both as contributions to the civic enlightenment of our own people and also as valuable weapons of propaganda in overseas countries. Now, in time of war, these same sponsors are placing the bulk of their filmic resources at the disposal of the Government, and the addition of Imperial Chemical Industries to the list of documentary sponsors has increased yet again the potential film supply of the Films Division of the M.O.I. Shell's films of instruction and information are now paralleled by I.C.I.'s sponsorship of *The Harvest Shall Come*, a film which is not only a feather in their cap but also is bound to be welcomed by at least three government departments—Information, Agriculture and Labour.

## The Real Thing

THE WEEKLY newsreels flash by. A snippet of this and a snippet of that and a good noisy sound track. The cinema audience wants to see the news but the newsreel editor is obviously hard put to it to find his weekly footage. Battles take place in inaccessible places and very often at unfilmable speeds. Even when, and if any, celluloid reports do get here they are usually yesterday's sensation. The good old stand-bys have gone; the Melbourne Cup, the Braemar Games, the Trooping of the Colours, Ascot fashions and those jolly Italian officers, riding their horses up and down cliff faces, greet us no longer. It is not a great loss but it rather puts the newsreels on the spot. Armament production stories fall rather flat unless they are properly dramatised, army exercises have been done too often, our rulers are too busy to indulge in many personal appearances, rationing and the party truce have removed banquet speeches and excitement from elections. Russia, China and America seem, so far, to have sent us little to fill the gap. Therefore we salute Paramount News who, a week or two ago, presented us with something new and something exciting. They devoted a whole issue to one section of the war and they told their story through the eyes and in the words of their cameraman on the spot. The issue was called *Burma Front*, and the cameraman-reporter was Maurice Ford. The story was not basically good nor inspiring, and one's first thought was that we were in for a gloomy retrospective review. This was far from being the case. The editing and the commentary combined to put the sad story of the Burma retreat into perspective and even to make it exciting and heartening. The film was excellently shot under obviously the most tiresome conditions and for the first time really showed us something of what war in that part of the world is like. By carefully putting the catastrophic side of the picture first the editor was able to build up his triumphant finale of British bombers at work raiding the Japanese occupied towns, and the film made its points without being false or underestimating anybody's intelligence. Our congratulations to Messrs. Paramount and to Maurice Ford.

## An Encouraging Development

WITH THE end of the 1941-42 season the Film Society movement in this country is once again to be congratulated on its continued vigour despite the difficulties of war-time. The Film Society page in *D.N.L.* over the past six months provides sufficient evidence of the imagination and initiative which has kept this progressive movement going so well during the past three years. But the most notable thing of all has been the rapid development, particularly during the past year, of the Scientific Film Societies. In this, as so often, Scotland has been a pioneer; but in England too the movement is spreading, and the London Scientific Film Society is able to report its most successful season ever. The value of Scientific Film Societies is of special importance now, when it is more than ever necessary for the work of the scientist to be identified with and understood by the people at large. It is to be hoped that after the war these Societies will be enabled to continue their work on a larger and more ambitious scale.

## Counter-criticism

WE HAVE RECEIVED comments and correspondence with regard to the review of the five-minute film *Middle East* which appeared in our last issue. The reviewer is criticised on the ground that in his condemnation of the absence of direct reference to people in this diagrammatic film he lost sight of the importance of what the film did in fact contain. Some of our readers point out that the film was designed solely to give the public new information about broad world strategies and has been a success with working-class as well as middle-class audiences on this basis. It seems to us that the whole question of the role of the individual in relation to strategical films is so admirably dealt with in John Grierson's article in the current number that little more need be said on the subject. The review of *Middle East*—as is true of all *D.N.L.* reviews—expressed the opinion only of the reviewer, an opinion which was not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. In any case the M.O.I. Films Division is to be congratulated on sponsoring, well in advance, a film which anticipated the serious character of coming events in this vital theatre of war.

## Films and India

IN THE March issue of "The Journal of the Film Industry" (published in Bombay), an editorial refers to the Governmental attitude to Indian films as being characterised by short-sightedness, apathy and lack of imagination. "Ever since the years 1927-28," continues the editorial, "arguments and appeals have been periodically placed before Government, right till the declaration of the present War, without any response. Had Government taken any heed of those appeals the cinema in India could have reached, by 1939, the proportions it has, in the same period, attained in England, when at least positive raw film, shortages in which are at present causing considerable loss to the industry, could have been indigenously manufactured. Then even the production of powerful anti-Nazi, as of war propaganda, films, which up to date have come exclusively from America, could have been rendered possible instead of the unprofitable eleventh hour well-digging processes practised during the last couple of years. But what is equally, if not more, important is that the Hindu-Muslim unity, for the achievement of which budget provisions are being made—though not used—since last year in the hope of doing something, could, through preaching in films, have been secured long ago without any danger of the country's political advance being rudely checked as hitherto." Although no mention is made of the all-Indian units established and trained by Alex Shaw during 1941, it may be assumed that these are to be regarded as a possible jumping-off ground for a new approach to the problem of Indian film production, particularly as regards the enormous population figures, the high percentage of illiteracy and the variations of languages, all of which are equally involved.

# THE DOCUMENTARY IDEA 1942

By JOHN GRIERSON

This is a slightly abridged version of a letter from Grierson to a member of the Editorial Board of DNL.

Its content is so important that it can be regarded as a considered and categorical article on propaganda policy.

The first part of our work in Canada is done. They have a film organisation now that will do great things for the country if they look after it in good faith till the young people develop. Much of it has been pulled off the sky. On the other hand, there are special reasons why the national use of films should have fitted so quickly and progressively into the Canadian scene. The need to achieve unity in a country of many geographical and psychological distances is only one of them and not the most important. More vital, I think, is the fact that Canada is waking up to her place in the world and is conscious, as English speaking countries do not seem sufficiently to be, that it is a new sort of place in the world. A medium which tries to explain the shape of events and create loyalties in relation to the developing scene is welcome. I cannot otherwise explain the measure of support we have been given, nor particularly the long range hopes that have been placed in this school of projection we have set up.

Thank particularly Legg, who has been such a worker as you never saw: with one a month in the theatre series for a couple of years, and stepping up now to two. It will be easier as the research staff grows, for the key to that sort of thing is in the first place academic. There is first-rate support in the fields of economics and international affairs. This is a characteristic of Canada and will have considerable influence on the development of the group. Legg is looking after his own films and fifty or sixty more on the stocks while I am away, with Ross McLean in general charge. McLean represents as well as anyone what Canada is about nowadays and keeps it marching into a dream of the Canadian future which in these parts excites almost everyone under forty. I support him in this, with a special affection for the French Canadian viewpoint. The co-operative and peasant movements down there in Lower Canada will affect the picture greatly. This young and critical nationalism is an easy binding force and lights up eyes and energies in a remarkable way. It would be silly to expect too much now but, in vigour and confidence and the will to do a public work, the Canadian unit is as good as anything of the kind anywhere.

The *World in Action* series is the particular interest of Legg and myself and of Lash, the Director of Public Information. It says more of what is going on in our minds. The films

in this series develop in authority and command good critical attention both in Canada and in the States. We have helpful spectators on papers like *Time*, the *New York Times*, and the *New Yorker*, and one gathers the impression from *Variety's* reviews that it has at last found in the war something tougher and bloodier than itself. The policy behind them, I think you know fairly well. We are concerned primarily with the relation of local strategies to larger world ones. This is partly in reaction to what some of us regard as a dangerous parochialism in much English-speaking propaganda: but also because Canada is moving as swiftly toward a world viewpoint as England in recent years has been moving away from it.

The style comes out of the job. Since it is a question of giving people a pattern of thought and feeling about highly complex and urgent events, we give it as well as we know, with a minimum of dawdling over how some poor darling happens to react to something or other. This is one time, we say, when history doesn't give a good goddam who is being the manly little fellow in adversity and is only concerned with the designs for living and dying that will actually and in fact shape the future. If our stuff pretends to be certain it's because people need certainty. If our maps look upside down, it's because it is time people saw things in relativity. If we bang them out one a fortnight and no misses, instead of sitting six months on our fannies cuddling them to sweet smotherhood, it's because a lot of braves in Russia and Japan and Germany are banging out things too and we'd maybe better learn how, in time. If the manner is objective and hard, it's because we believe the next phase of human development needs that kind of mental approach. After all, there is no danger of the humanitarian tradition perishing while the old are left alive to feel sorry for themselves and make "beautiful" pictures about it. Sad to say, the beating heart of the Stuarts was all they had left; and so it is with vanishing policies.

The penalty of realism is that it is about reality and has to bother for ever not about being "beautiful" but about being right. It means a stalwart effort these days: one has to chill the mind to so many emotional defences of the decadent and so many smooth rationalisations of the ineffective. One has even to chill the mind to what, in the vacuum of daydreams, one might normally admire. In our world, it is specially necessary these

days to guard against the aesthetic argument. It is plausible and apt to get under the defences of any maker in any medium. But, of course, it is the dear bright-eyed old enemy and by this time we know it very well. Documentary was from the beginning—when we first separated our public purpose theories from those of Flaherty—an anti-aesthetic movement.

What confuses the history is that we had always the good sense to use the aesthetics. We did so because we liked them and because we needed them. It was, paradoxically, with the first-rate aesthetic help of people like Flaherty and Cavalcanti that we mastered the techniques necessary for our quite unaesthetic purpose. That purpose was plain and was written about often enough. Rotha spent a lot of time on it. We were concerned not with the category of "purposiveness without purpose" but with that other category beyond, which used to be called teleological. We were reformers open and avowed: concerned—to use the old jargon—with "bringing alive the new materials of citizenship", "crystallising sentiments" and creating those "new loyalties from which a progressive civic will might derive." Take that away and I'd be hard put to it to say what I have been working for these past fifteen years. What, of course, made documentary successful as a movement was that in a decade of spiritual weariness it reached out, almost alone among the media, toward the future. Obviously it was the public purpose within it which commanded government and other backing, the progressive social intention within it which secured the regard of the newspapers and people of goodwill everywhere, and the sense of a public cause to be served which kept its own people together.

These facts should have made it clear that the documentary idea was not basically a film idea at all, and the film treatment it inspired only an incidental aspect of it. The medium happened to be the most convenient and most exciting available to us. The idea itself, on the other hand, was a new idea for public education: its underlying concept that the world was in a phase of drastic change affecting every manner of thought and practice, and the public comprehension of the nature of that change vital. There it is, exploratory, experimental and stumbling, in the films themselves: from the dramatisation of the workman and his daily drag to the dramatisation of modern organisation and

the new corporate elements in society and to the dramatisation of social problems: each a step in the attempt to understand the stubborn raw material of our modern citizenship and wake the heart and the will to their mastery. Where we stopped short was that, with equal deliberation, we refused to specify what political agency should carry out that will or associate ourselves with any one of them. Our job specifically was to wake the heart and the will; it was for the political parties to make before the people their own case for leadership.

I would not restate these principles merely out of historical interest. The important point is that they have not changed at all and they are not going to change, nor be changed. The materials of citizenship to-day are different and the perspectives wider and more difficult; but we have, as ever, the duty of exploring them and of waking the heart and will in regard to them. (Documentary is at once a critique of propaganda and a practice of it.) That duty is what documentary is about. It is, moreover, documentary's primary service to the State to be persisted in, whatever deviation may urged upon it, or whatever confusion of thought, or easiness of mind, success may bring. Let no one tell you that a few bright-eyed films or a couple of Academy awards—from Hollywood of all places!—mean anything more than that a bit of a job was done yesterday. To-morrow it is the same grind with ever new material—some easy, some not so easy—to be brought into design; and no percentage in it for anyone except doing the rightest job of education and inspiration we know how for the state and the people. Considering the large audiences we now reach and the historical stakes that depend on rightness of approach, it is a privilege worth a measure of personal effort and sacrifice. If there is common agreement in the "strategy" I have indicated, differences in daily "tactic" will not seriously affect unity.

We should see equally straight regarding the social factor in our work over the thirties. It was a powerful inspiration and very important for that period. Without *Housing Problems* and the whole movement of social understanding such films helped to articulate, I think history would have found another and bloodier solution when the bombs first rained on the cities of Britain. But that Indian summer of decent social intention was not just due to the persistence of people like ourselves and to the humanitarian interests of our governmental and industrial colleagues. It may also have marked a serious limiting of horizons. It may have been an oblique sign that England, to her peril, was becoming interested only in herself. Some of us sensed it as we reached out in every way we knew for an opportunity of wider international statement. We did not, I am afraid, sense it half enough and we share the guilt of that sultry decade with all the other inadequate guides of public opinion. The job we did was perhaps a good

enough job to have done at all, but our materials were not chosen widely enough.

Nothing seems now more significant of the period than that, at a time so crucial, there was no longer eager sponsorship for world-thinking in a country which still pretended to world-leadership. Russia had its third International and Germany had that geo-political brains trust which, centred in Haushofer, spread its influence through Hess to Hitler and to every department of the Reich. In the light of events, how much on the right lines Tallents was and how blind were the people who defeated his great concept! For documentary the effect was important. The E.M.B. which might have done so much for positive international thinking, died seven years too early; and it was hardly, as we comically discovered, the job for the G.P.O. There was the brief bright excursion to Geneva: there was that magnificent scheme for the I.L.O.; there was my own continuous and fruitless pursuit of the bluebird we called the Empire and the momentary hopeful stirring in the Colonial Office under Malcolm MacDonald; there was the Imperial Relations Trust, five years too late, and affected from the first by the weight of impending events. The international factor, so necessary to a realist statement of even national affairs, was not in the deal.

It is, of course, more vital than ever to a documentary policy. We, the leaders and the people and the instruments of public opinion, have been out-thought by Russia, Germany and Japan because we have been out-thought in modern international terms. Because documentary is concerned with affecting the vital terms of public thinking towards a realistic comprehension of events and their mastery, its duty is plain. To use the phrase of these present days, you can't win the war—neither "outside" nor "inside"—without a revision of the public mind regarding England's place in the world and the larger morale that goes with a sense of being on the bandwagon of history. Thumbing a ride to the future is not nearly good enough.

I look back on Munich as representing a milestone in my own outlook on documentary. From that time the social work in which we had been engaged seemed to me relatively beside the point. Munich was the last necessary evidence of how utterly out-of-category our English political thinking was and how literally most of our political leaders did not know what it was all about. From that point it seemed clear that we had, willy-nilly, to relate the interests of the English people to new world forces of the most dynamic sort—physical, economic and ideological. It was inevitable that our first instinct should be to put our head in the sand and in a last frantic gesture, try to avoid the implications of the future; but the significance of our indecision in regard to both Germany and Russia was plain to see. World revolution had broken out on the biggest possible scale, and to the point of having people like Churchill recognise it as such. Win or

lose, the economy of England and her place in the world were under threats of serious alteration and, however we might presently hide our eyes, people's minds had to be prepared and made fit for them if what was great and good in England was to survive. It was not much use concentrating on changes in a status whose quo was being challenged from every active corner of the world and apt to be blown to historical smithereens. Internal social issues were no longer enough when the deeper political issues had become the whole of realism.

This was one person's reaction. I knew it meant the exploration of a healthier basis for the public instruction which documentary represented than the reactionary régime at that time allowed. But I was altogether doubtful of where the journey would lead. I hoped, vaguely I must admit, that youth and the viewpoints their world position imposed upon them would bring a measure of progressive strength from the Dominions. I did not know how that strength could ever be articulated in time to save documentary from its greatest set-back: the assumption of official sponsorship by the old, the obstinate and the inept. That period, thank heaven, is over and, in the combined strength of what you have so hardly won the right to do in England and what has now been developed elsewhere, it should be possible to create a new strength of thought and purpose. You must not allow anyone to forget the part of Beddington in this: and of Elton. Beddington was, personally, under no obligation to the documentary viewpoint and, like myself, he is under compunction as an official to think of other considerations besides those which are the especial considerations of the documentary group. The documentary idea may be the most progressive and most valuable one for a department of propaganda, and I would even maintain that it is the only approach which could, developed, match the depth and thoroughness of the German and Russian approaches. But it cannot in practice be the whole menu. There have to be "corn" departments too and a good practical propagandist will have a pretty selection of them if he is to keep the "fules and bairns" satisfied, save himself from fighting a hundred unimportant battles, and hold his energy for what is long-term and fundamental.

The danger, I frequently observe, for both the propagandist and his purpose, is when the success of the corn begins to overshadow what is fundamental. It is because of this danger that the documentary idea is so necessary a guide and its constant propagation the best service a paper like D.N.L. can do to organisations like Beddington's and mine. Because it insists on comprehension it may be a hard and academic taskmaster but you certainly can't fool around with it. There is perhaps a point where the official mind is apt to say—it is all very well in peace-time for the documentary people to turn the public occasion to their special purpose, but in war it is different. This sounds plausible, but

see no reason to fear it. If the documentary idea is to be the conscience of propaganda, its job at times is to be uncomfortable; and so long as the Service of the State remains its first interest, only the devious will wish to resent it. I would only make this qualification, that to fight at every drop of the hat is suicide and to be "pure" you don't have to be a purist.

In spite of many difficulties and confusions in the public scene, documentary can do an increasingly useful job, here and now and within the limits of official sponsorship. Some of the difficulties are constantly quoted to me and particularly from England. We are, it is emphasised, far from articulating our war aims. We insist on tolerations and freedoms which often, some say, merely disguise the "freedom" to go back to England's *status quo ante* and the "tolerance" of past stupidities. We have not yet learned to state the new creative terms which will give reality to "freedom" and "tolerance" in an actual future. We denounce fanaticism in others because we have not ourselves discovered a shape of things-to-come to be fanatical about. We still stand bravely but vaguely between two worlds and talk the language of indecision: resting our case on hopes of Russia and the U.S., the bravery of our youth, and our capacity to stand up to other peoples' offensives. That is what they say, and there is reason behind the criticism. But the practical view-point is to gauge exactly the historical reasons behind these phenomena and see what, even within those limitations, can presently be done. Take the lack of war aims, for example. I am told that documentary can't do a lot without war aims and must mark time with the non-controversial badinage of the humanities: with art for art's sake, the sweetheart, playing peepo round the corner. No war aims, I am told, becomes "no policy" for documentary. Yet those who insist on "no policy" are correctly reflecting a phase which dares not go right and dares not go left and has no easy solution to offer except first winning the war. It would be wise to see the "no policy" business for what it is, a present political necessity for governments which, for many reasons—some schizophrenic, some more realistically involving allies—may not speak their minds; and explore what can be done nonetheless and in spite of it.

The situation is too deeply laid to believe that you can nurse or wheedle or fight a "no policy" for propaganda into a positive one. At the same time official personnel counts for something, and England is luckier with the present set-up than anyone could ever have expected. Nursing and even fighting count for something, in so far as the way at least be prepared toward a positive policy of "political warfare". There documentary can most deeply serve England. Let me explain. As usual, I take the position that, while I believe political issues are the whole of realism, the "agency" of correct political change is not my concern. It may come in

any colour of the rainbow, and call itself the British Council or the Society of St. George for England, Canterbury, Inc.—as one great realist put it, it may come "even in its nightshirt"—so long as it is the midwife of correct political change.

To put it in its simplest and naivest form—which it is still well to remember and maintain—correct political change will be that alignment of political principles and loyalties which, in the circumstances of the world today, will best serve the interests of peoples of all lands, and the English people in proportion, and actively mobilise the native heart and mind to these ends. It will be that alignment which actively eliminates the evil forces, wherever they may be, which are against such interests; and all decadent forces, wherever they may be, which are not competent to control the developing scene. That is something on which all healthy elements must agree; and the unhealthy elements present events are sufficiently taking care of. War has this grim compensation, that only the successful generals are considered good ones; and there is a daily measuring stick for leaders in that most powerful quarter of public appraisal, the stomach muscles of the people.

It is also fairly plain what areas of chaos have to be reduced to order, whatever political alignment develops. The armies and air forces of the world are carving out new geographical concepts and shapes. The processes of total war are developing new economic concepts, and more modern methods of administrative control. First things are miraculously coming first, including the food and faith of the people. Though minor social changes are not major political ones, and the radish may be one colour outside and another in, the present flow of social decency must lubricate the development of state planning, corporate thinking and co-operative citizenship. The most important of the British films have, of course, been those which have seized on one or other of these changes, and it is of first-rate political significance that Jack Beddington should have sponsored them. Their importance is that in explaining the shape of these developments they are exploring the inevitable shapes of the future, rough and jerry-built as they may now appear. It does not matter if the films are at first not so good. The history of documentary is the history of exploring new fields of material, always with difficulty first, then easier and better. Its chief temptation has been to abandon exploration and, doing better what has been done before, pursue the comfort of technical excellence. You will remember that this also was one of the reasons for Russia's attack on "formal art".

The new fields of positive material are wide and we have, all of us, only scratched the surface. The field of social changes is not, *per se*, the most important of them. Kindness in a queue at Plymouth, which means so much to the B.B.C. overseas broadcasts, does nothing

about India. The important shapes are obviously those directly related to the national and international management of industrial, economic and human forces. They are important in winning the war without. They also represent, on a longer term view, a new way of thought which may be the deepest need of our generation. In so far as documentary is primarily concerned with attitudes of mind, this aspect of the matter is worth a great deal of attention. "Total war" is said to require "total effort" but this has not been easily come by in nations which still have a hang-over of nineteenth century thinking and *laissez faire*. "The methods of the nineteenth century will not work in the People's Century which is now about to begin," says Vice-President Wallace. At a hundred points-to-day wrong attitudes are still being taught: some in innocence of the dynamic change which total effort involves: some in calculated defence of the sectional and selfish interests which total effort must necessarily eliminate. This psychological fifth column is more deeply entrenched than any other, and all of us have some unconscious affiliation with it as a heritage from our out-of-date education. Rotted in the old "untotal" ways and in the privileges and pleasures we enjoyed under them, we have to examine every day anew what in our words and sentiments we are really saying. A critique of sentiments is a necessary preliminary to propaganda and to documentary as its critical instrument.

It will certainly take continuous teaching of the public mind before the new relationship between the individual and the state, which total effort involves, becomes a familiar and automatic one. A beginning has been made, but only a beginning. The capacity of the individual for sacrifice has already been well described and honoured. So has team work, particularly in the fighting services. So has the mastery of some of the new technical worlds which the war has opened up. So far so good, but it is the habit of thought that drives on toward the integration of all national forces for the public good, which goes to the root of things. Here we come face to face with the possibility of integrating these forces in a thousand new ways and the release of co-operative and corporate energies on a scale never dreamt of before. To consider this simply as a temporary device of war is to mistake its significance and by so doing to dishearten the people; for it is what people in their hearts have been harking for and represents the fulfilment of an era. Total war may yet appear as the dreadful period of forced apprenticeship in which we learned what we had hitherto refused to learn, how to order the vast new forces of human and material energies to decent human ends. In any case, there it is, a growing habit of thought for documentary to watch and describe and instil at a hundred points: serving at once the present need of England and the pattern of the future.

Total effort needs, in the last resort, a



background of faith and a sense of destiny; but this concept of integrating all resources to an active end gives the principal pattern for a documentary approach. It will force documentary more intimately into a consideration of active ends and of the patterns of integration which best achieve them. It will also force documentary into a study of the larger phases of public change which may not have seemed to it necessary before. To take a simple example, we have an excellent film from Anstey on how to put out incendiary bombs and handle the local aspects of fire watching; but we have had no film covering the basic revolution of strategy in anti-blitz activities which the experience of blitz inspired. England's discovery of the intimate relationship between the social structure and defence gives point to its new "dynamic" interest in the social structure, provides an excellent example of "total pattern" and indicates the revolution in public viewpoint required by total effort. Consider, at the other end of the field of war, *Time's* report from Burma: "The Japanese fought total war, backed by political theory and strengthened by powerful propaganda. They made this total war feasible by cornering economic life in conquered areas, utilising labour power and seizing raw materials to supply continuing war from war itself. It is a type of war thoroughly understood by the Russians and the Germans, half adopted by the Chinese, and little understood by Britain and America". If it is "little understood" it only means that in this aspect of activity, as in so many others, effectiveness depends on a new way of thought which we have not mastered deeply enough to practice in new circumstances. The result of the war lies in the hands of those who understand it and can teach it.

One phrase sticks out like a sore thumb from the reports of the Eastern war and reveals a further perspective. Referring to the loss of native Burmese support we are accused of "lacking sound political theory". England's failure to understand other points of view may again be the heritage of a period in which we were powerful enough and rich enough not to have to bother about them, but that day has gone. Another new attitudes have to be created in which England sees her interest in relation to others. You may call it, if you like, the way of relativity. It involves an attitude of mind which can be quickly acquired rather than a vast knowledge of what those interests are. It will mature more easily from a consideration of the patterns of real and logical relationship with other countries (geo-political and ideological) than from exchanges of "cultural" vacua. The latter have never stood the test of events; yet England makes no films of the former. In this field, documentary might do much to de-parochialise some of our common ways of thought. There are many opportunities. Let me take an oblique example in Anstey's *Naval Operations*. Here was a neat, tight little film with that cool

technical treatment which has always been the distinction of the Shell Film Unit. But there are other fleets besides the English, including the Russian, Dutch, Australian and Canadian. They also have "relative" importance in a "total" view of naval operations. So has the German. So have the American and the Japanese, for even if the film was made before Pearl Harbour, the "fleet in being" is also a factor in naval operations. In this film, good as it was, the relative view-point was not taken because the total view-point was not taken, and the design of it, on the theory I am urging, belonged to the past. Do not mistake me. I am not complaining of a film I liked very much; I am merely indicating how various are the opportunities for the relativity approach.

Once consider that England is only important as it is related to other nations, and its problems and developments only important as they are recognised as part of wider problems and developments, and many subjects will reach out into healthier and more exciting perspectives of description than are presently being utilised. The past lack of relativity in England, which has been called "subjective", has been responsible for a good deal that seems trivial and even maudlin to other peoples. However stern and manly the voice that speaks it, it is still what it is and does not of course give an account of the reality of the people of England. The falsity of the impression comes from the falsity of the approach. It will not be easily cured, for it derives from historical factors of the deepest sort, and even documentary is bound to reflect them, however objective it may try to be. The fact that it is being presently cured at good speed represents indeed a triumph of clear thinking in difficult circumstances. A deliberate attempt to relate English perspectives to others would help the process. It may be the key to it. Incidentally, this relativity approach, apart from being one of the guides to a logical and sure internationalism, is a necessary guide to retaining allies. It is worth noting that there is a difference between making a film of the Polish forces to flatter Poland, or making a film of a Dominion to show what that Dominion "is doing for England", and making a film in which England takes her due place in a "total" pattern.

So much for new materials and new approaches. Styles are more difficult to talk about, for they must inevitably vary with countries. I think, however, that it is possible to make certain generalisations. Since events move speedily, and opportunities pass just as speedily, the tempo of production must change accordingly. A lot has to be done and done quickly if the public mind is to be tuned in time to what, amid these swift-moving changes of public organisation, is required of it. It is not the technical perfection of the film that matters, nor even the vanity of its maker, but what happens to that public mind. Never before has there been such a call for the

creation of new loyalties or bringing people to new kinds of sticking points. Times press and so must production; and with it must go a harder and more direct style. A dozen reasons make this inevitable. There is the need of striking while irons are hot, and this is especially true of front-line reporting and has its excellent examples in the German films of Poland, the West Front and Crete, and in *London Can Take It*, the Commando raids and *War Clouds in the Pacific*. There is also the need to create a sense of urgency in the public mind, and gear it in its everyday processes to the hardness and directness which make for action and decision.

If there is one thing that good propaganda must not do these days it is to give people catharsis. This again, not just because "the war has to be won", but because, as far as the eye can see, we are entering an era of action, in which only the givers of order and the doers generally will be permitted to survive. Someone winced when I suggested in England recently, that in times of great change the only songs worth writing were marching songs. This makes the same point except that the term must be read widely to include everything that makes people think and fight and organise for the creation of order. One doesn't have to associate oneself with the German definition of "order" to see that their insistence on activism is an all too successful recognition of the same need. So with a spectacular flourish, is the Herr Doktor's "when anyone mentions the word culture, I reach for my gun". It is not peculiarly or specially a German sentiment. In the name of the inaction they call culture we have permitted a wilderness, and it will certainly not be in the name of culture that it will blossom again.

In its basic meaning, culture is surely the giving of law to what is without it. That hard but truer way of culture will not go by default if we search out the design in the seeming chaos of present events and, out of to-day's experiments in total effort, create the co-operative and more profoundly "democratic" ways of the future. The verbs are active. To go back once again to Tallents' Mill quotation, the pattern of the artist in this relationship will indicate the living principle of action.

So the long windy openings are out, and so are the cathartic finishes in which a good brave tearful self-congratulatory and useless time has been had by all. The box-office—pander to what is lazy, weak, reactionary, vicarious, sentimental and essentially defeatist in all of us—will, of course, instinctively howl for them. It will want to make "relaxation", if you please, even out of war. But don't, for God's sake, give it. Deep down, the people want to be fired to tougher ways of thought and feeling and to have their present braveries extended to the very roots of their social existence. In that habit they will win more than a war.

# A CANADIAN EXPERIMENT

By DONALD W. BUCHANAN

The author of this article is himself in charge of the non-theatrical scheme which he outlines. The work being done in Canada, amongst communities on the whole more scattered and diverse than in this country, is of special interest at a time when our own non-theatrical schemes are developing so rapidly.

To bring the full story of Canada at war to isolated rural areas by means of films, has been the aim of an experiment in adult education fostered by the National Film Board of Canada. The object at the same time has been to stimulate community discussion regarding the objectives of the war. Concentration has been placed on motion pictures explaining Canada's part in industrial and agricultural production and in armaments. The project began in January 1942, and now in June, forty-three travelling theatres using 16 mm. portable projectors are in operation, under Film Board direction, from Comox on Vancouver Island, to the Atlantic coast fishing villages of Nova Scotia. Over two hundred and fifty thousand persons now attend these rural showings each month.

The Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship has co-operated from the start. Funds have been given the Film Board by the Dominion Office of Public Information, and in addition, eight provincial Departments of Education and seven University Departments of Extension are assisting.

The travelling theatres operate on circuits, each one of which reaches twenty communities monthly. Each village served knows that the free films will return on the same day each month. There are afternoon showings for children and evening ones for adults. Community participation has proved encouraging. Besides locally sponsored talks, there are many platform discussions and forums. Thus in Manitoba, where large settlements peopled by farmers of German and Ukrainian origin, are on the circuits, a field representative of the Film Board gives the following report on one form of discussion technique which has proved successful:

"A group of five to seven local citizens consented to take the platform with me during a half-hour intermission in the middle of the film programme, for a round-table discussion. The intermission followed the picture *Tools of War* which provided an excellent jumping-off place for the discussion of issues connected with our war effort. The Canadian part of the picture impresses people with the amount Canada is already doing (many were very surprised) and the German part impresses them with the much greater amount that must yet be done. The general theme of the round-table discussions was 'How We Can Increase our War Effort'. Criticism was not lacking but was usually quite intelligent, and the discussions always took a decidedly positive direction. Very constructive consideration of social issues came to the fore."

The projectionists serve remote districts by train, by automobile, and sometimes during snow storms by sleigh. Where electric power is not available, portable generating units are used.

Canadian films produced by the Film Board,

along with a few items from Australia and Great Britain, make up the programmes. The theme of the opening presentation in January was *Peoples of Canada*. There then followed programmes about the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, and Canadian armament production. In April, several films about the Navy and a new educational picture about the MacKenzie River district of the Canadian sub-Arctic were shown. A special teaching film is also added each month for schools.

The programme beginning June 6th centres on the theme of the *The Canadian Army*. The following items are included: *Fight for Liberty*, *Letter from Camp Borden*, *Wings of a Continent*, *Canadian Landscape* (in colour), and *Hen Hop*—a comic designed to promote the purchase of War Savings Certificates.

In general, these film circuits have been restricted entirely to rural areas. Only here and there are villages or towns of as many as one thousand inhabitants included. The films therefore go to regions which do not usually see motion pictures, in fact one report from the Lac St. Jean district in Quebec states that over 90 per cent of the audience had never heard or seen a sound film before.

The travelling 16 mm. theatres are distributed as follows: British Columbia 3, Alberta 8, Saskatchewan 8, Manitoba 5, Ontario 5, Quebec 7, New Brunswick 4, Prince Edward Island 1, Nova Scotia 2. The average attendance in

February was over 1,500 a week on each circuit.

In Alberta, especially fine progress has been made with the help of the Department of Extension of the provincial University. There, several supplementary circuits are being operated by farm organizations such as the United Grain Growers. Also in Saskatchewan the Wheat Pools are maintaining similar travelling theatres under this scheme.

Most of the circuits in the Province of Quebec show French language films, and here the Quebec government has provided the services of itinerant lecturers who accompany the film projectionists on their travels. The largest audiences are found in some of the parishes along the lower St. Lawrence.

Communities of "New Canadian" settlers in western Canada, of Ukrainian, Scandinavian, German, and Polish origin, are reached by many of these showings. Here the response has been particularly worth while. A school principal from Angusville, Manitoba, writes:

"Many of the people of this district, being but slightly conversant with the English language, are not readily reached through the medium of the spoken or printed word; but in the case of visual presentation the appeal is instantaneous and the effect more positive. Thus, these films are advantageous in influencing the attitude to the war, in educating, and in provoking thought along lines not ordinarily pursued."

FOR PROMPT SERVICE  
AND MAINTENANCE OF

**"EDITOLA"**

AND OTHER FILM-EDITING APPARATUS

TELEPHONE: GER. 4633

PHOTOGRAPHIC  
ELECTRICAL Co., Ltd.  
71 DEAN STREET, W.I.

WE RECOMMEND THE CONVERSION OF ALL SUITABLE APPARATUS TO TAKE STANDARD "KODAK" POSITIVE FILM CENTRES WHICH ARE READILY AVAILABLE AND FACILITATE INTERCHANGEABILITY. ENQUIRIES INVITED. NEW APPARATUS SUPPLIED BY US IN FUTURE WILL NOT BE FITTED WITH METAL SERRATED CENTRES UNLESS SPECIALLY ORDERED.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3

NUMBER 6

JUNE 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Center, New York.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1

GERRARD 4253

## FILMS AND SCIENCE

The Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers has been engaged, since its foundation in 1937, in compiling information about scientific films available in Great Britain. The recommendations published below represent criteria for the collection of scientific films which have been drawn up for the guidance of the National Film Library. The Committee points out that ideally all scientific films should be preserved, but that, if this is not possible, the lists indicated below ensure at least a representative selection.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY

The stated objects of the National Film Library are to obtain a selection of films to (1) make the collection representative of the art of the film, (2) provide historians of the future with their raw material.

To do this, its Selection Committee have had as their aim "to acquire for preservation purposes copies of films both old and new, illustrating either the development of the art of the cinema or of contemporary history" (1939 report of the British Film Institute), and they bear in mind "the need to record the life and habits of the present day, such as our taste in clothes, houses and foods, our mannerisms, our accents, our turns of speech, and in so doing to throw light on our changing ideals and social outlook" (1941 report of the N.F.L.).

The Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers would like to interpret these objects of the National Film Library into criteria for the collection of scientific films. It is the opinion of this committee that all scientific films should ideally be preserved because of the illustrations they afford of the varied uses to which the film is put and of developing film technique. If this is impossible under the present circumstances, a comprehensive selection should be made and the following examples are a contribution to that list.

1. Representative films which show the technical standard of scientific films during the previous decade should be preserved. Especially interesting and worthy of keeping would be examples of very early scientific documentary films. The technical development of the film is already well covered by films in the N.F.L. except where the presentation of science is concerned. The Scientific Films Committee would like to know whether the National Film Library have examples of all the different colour processes.

The following films are recommended.  
First Ten Years of Flying Shell Film Unit  
Exhibition Days " " "  
Mouvements Vibratoires Film Centre  
Industrial Britain Central Film Library  
Climbing Plants (and other Gaumont British  
early biological films) Equipments Ltd.

2. Films which illustrate any recent advance in film technique which is specially useful for or specially adapted for in portraying science and thus increasing the scope and possibilities of the scientific film should also be preserved. A series of films showing the development of the moving diagram would be valuable. Slow and speeded-up motion films taken with infra-red light, cine-radiography, stroboscopic technique, can be illustrated by films in this category.

Transfer of Power	Petroleum Films Bureau
Distillation	" " "
Malaria	" " "
How Talks Talk	Gaumont British Equip-
	ments Ltd.
Amoeba	" " "
Intestinal Digestion	Kodak Medical Film
	Library
Skin Deep	Central Council for
	Health Education
Generation of Involute	
Gear Teeth	National Film Library

3. There are a large number of amateur scientific films in this country which are important from the point of view of the growth, use and position of the film. They are therefore given a section to themselves. These films are generally made by individuals in teaching establishments and research stations for a limited use and distribution. Occasionally, more than one copy is made, and the film is then distributed more widely.

Vitamins	Educational & General
	Services Ltd.
African Lungfish	" " "
Tomato Growing	" " "
Galapagos	" " "
Colour Senses of Bees	Dr. Ilse, 2 Copthall
	Close, E.C.2.
Virus Diseases in	Rothamsted Experiment-
Plants	al Station, Herts
Rhythm of the Heart	Prof. Davies, Dept. of
	Anatomy, Sheffield
	University
Ocean Tides	E. C. Barton Esq., The
	Ridgway, Hempstead
	Road, Watford, Herts

4. A selection of the best current instructional films for both child and adult audiences should be made periodically to illustrate the extent to which each subject is covered by existing films. If a subject, such as chemistry or psychology, should have few films on it distributed in this country, a representative should be kept even if it is not a first class film.

## Agriculture:

Protection of Fruit	Petroleum Films Bureau
Speed the Plough	Associated British Film
	Distributors

## Biology:

Life Cycle of a Plant	Gaumont British Equip-
	ments Ltd.

Coelenterata	" " "
Annelid Worms	" " "
Arachnida	" " "

## Chemistry:

Colloids in Medi-	
cine	British Colloids Ltd.
Crystals	Gaumont British Equip-
	ments Ltd.

Chemical Work in the Centrifuge Cone	Miss Hadfield, National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, Middx.	Manufacture of Gas	British Commercial Gas Association	selection of these films be kept for the future. A short selection of films illustrating the impact of science on social conditions are given.	
Economics: Money	Science Films	Production of Nickel	Mond Nickel Co. Ltd., Thames House, S.W.1	Learning to Live	Central Film Library
Embryology: Echinoderms	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.	Shipyards	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.	Smoke Menace	British Commercial Gas Association
Development of Chick	" " "	The Filter	" " " "	Kensal House	" " "
Engineering: Transfer of Power Springs	Petroleum Films Bureau	Cheese for Choice	Central Film Library	Housing Problems	" " "
How the Motor Works	Private H. L. Elwitz, 13801140, 87th Coy. Pioneer Corps., Pembroke Dock, South Wales	6. Films on the History of Science have been given a separate section from Section 4 because of their wide significance in connection with the aims of the National Films Library. There are a number of films having historical approach to science and illustrating the development of science. These are very important and their numbers will increase in the future.		On the Way to Work	Ministry of Labour
Health: Defeat Diphtheria	Ministry of Information, C.F.L.	Harvey and the Circulation of the Blood	Physiological Film Library, Oxford	Children at School	Central Film Library
Vision	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.	Vitamins	Educational and General Services Ltd.	The City	" " "
Malaria	Petroleum Films Bureau	Medieval Village	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.	Malaria	Petroleum Film Bureau
Men in Danger	Anglo-American Film Corporation	Colloids in Medicine	British Colloids Ltd.	Tins for India	" " "
(This last film has been withdrawn, but it is an important film and should definitely be preserved.)		Prelude to Flight	Capt. D'Arcy Cartwright	Pipeline	" " "
Geology: Oil from the Earth	Petroleum Films Bureau	Pasteur Edison	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer	The Filter	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.
Mathematics: X - X = 0	National Film Library	The Magic Bullet	Warner Bros.	Anybody's Bugbear	" " "
Generation of Involute Gear Teeth		7. Interpretive films or films with a sociological basis, which express some current scientific methods and ideals and their connection with society as a whole are increasingly being made. It is very important that a representative		Enough to Eat?	British Commercial Gas Association
Vector Illustrations of a 3-phase Field	M. J. Kauffman Esq., 18 Upper Stanhope St., Liverpool				
Wave Form Illustrations of a 3-phase Field	" " "				
Physiology: Breathing	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.				
Vision	" " "				
Muscles	Kodak Film Library				
Rhythm of the Heart	Prof. Davies, Dept. of Anatomy, Sheffield University				
Psychology: Psychology Today	G. L. Bell Esq., 29 Albany Street, N.W.1				
Physics: Cathode Ray Oscilloscope	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.				
How Talkies Talk	" " "				
Micrometer Calipers	Brent Laboratories, Cricklewood, N.W.2				
Sociology: Dark Rapture	Twentieth Century Fox				
Pêcheurs d'Oiseaux	Film Society				
Medieval Village	Gaumont British Equipments Ltd.				
(Medical Films, because of the restrictions on their showing, have not, as a rule, been viewed by the Association.)					
5. Films which show industrial machinery and manufacturing processes of all kinds should be collected.					
Airscrew	Petroleum Films Bureau				
Oil from the Earth	" " "				
ABC of Oil	" " "				

## It's been going on for years . . .

EACH week renews the interest which readers feel in their copy of the "Kinematograph Weekly".

This interest is nothing new. It's been going on for years, and the reasons are to be found quite easily in the way in which the "Kinematograph Weekly" gets down to "brass tacks", and presents them in a newsy way which never becomes "spiky".

This week, next week, for as long as there is a "Kinematograph Weekly", its extensive field-work will ensure a complete recording of current and future happenings in the artistic and technical progress of Kinematography.

# Kine<sup>matograph</sup> WEEKLY

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2

G. L. BELL, M.A., *Chairman*,  
M. GREGORY, B.Sc., *Hon. Sec.*



## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Fruit Spraying.** Shell Film Unit *Direction:* Kay Mander. *Camera:* Sidney Beadle. *Production:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 25 minutes.

*Subject:* A survey of the equipment, methods and chemicals used by commercial fruit growers and nurserymen.

*Treatment:* This is a film essentially for specialist audiences, and as such it can legitimately dish out nonstop information for two and a half reels. This information is certainly presented in a very orderly fashion so that it never becomes confusing and certainly never boring. If the layman does not retain much of it after one viewing, the film should be very helpful and instructional to the people concerned with the job.

It is shot with a pleasing precision and economy. One gets the impression that the shooting has been disciplined to a nicety to very careful scripting. This makes for an efficient and almost slick production. If it also means that the film is cool and impersonal, concerned only with the processes, and never with the men doing the work, the answer seems to be, in this and all instructional films, that you can't have it both ways and that a compromise distracts from the main drive of the film and untidies it. The director must make up his mind whether he wants a tidy film or a human film. *Fruit Spraying* is extremely tidy.

**Winter on the Farm.** Green Park Productions. *Directed by:* Ralph Keene. *Photographed by:* Erwin Hillier. *Agricultural Adviser:* Ralph Wightman. *Musical Director:* William Alwyn. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. non-theatrical. 15 minutes.

*Subject:* The first of four films showing farm-life through the seasons in wartime.

*Treatment:* This film is a delight to the eye. It has some of the most beautiful exterior photography that has been seen in recent years.

Too long has the general public considered the land as a kind of lucky dip, and the people on the land as having plenty of grouses but little knowledge or training. *Winter on the Farm* puts farming in its right perspective, as hard and never-ending work which demands as much skill as the making of an aeroplane or a tank.

The construction is simple: a farmer's daily round of inspection introduces the different aspects of farm-life, some of which the farmer describes himself. This holds the film together well, and leaves the layman impressed by the number of ways in which land-workers need skill.

Since the film has been centred round the people and work on a particular farm, and, presumably, for comparison the other three films of the series will also be made there, one would have liked to have gained a better geographical sense of the farm itself. This would have been achieved by a freer use of the true long shot, instead of a slightly repetitive and confining mid-shot. A hint of this feeling is already conveyed in one scene in the film (sheep in the foreground and a farm-cart passing across a field in the distant background), but it is not carried far enough.

As it stands, the film gives the impression that farming, even in winter, is a very pleasant, almost a romantic, occupation. This is a pity, be-

cause it must tend to make the layman envy the farmer his apparently happy lot, rather than make him conscious of the complexities and obstacles which confront land-workers. One of the reasons for this very fine gilding of the ginger-bread was a bad stroke of good fortune, which gave the unit on location nothing but fine weather for their shooting. And, just as there are arguments in to-day's urgency against waiting for good weather when you have bad, so there are possibly even more against waiting for bad weather when you have good.

But this is not wholly responsible for that impression. Partly, one feels, it is because the farm itself goes too well. We should have learnt more by seeing some actual problem or misfortune—a fox at the chickens; a dog run over; a sick calf; even one of the cows kicking over a bucket of milk in the dairy. Any one of these, or a better example, would have strengthened the film, by showing that Providence does not provide especially for people on the land.

This main criticism, however, does not detract from what is a first-class film. A homely commentary, by commentator and farmer, and some really successful and pleasant music round off a well-made job which has gained immensely from its imaginative and distinguished photography.

*Propaganda value:* Any film which increases our knowledge of the work and problems of a section of the community, will help to strengthen the nation's unity. And a film which carries this information as ably and pleasantly as *Winter on*

*the Farm* becomes also an asset as a film.

**New Towns for Old.** Strand Films. *Direction:* John Eldridge. *Camera:* Jo Jago. *Script:* Dylan Thomas. *Production:* Alexander Shaw. M.O.I. Five minutes.

*Subject:* The re-planning of British towns after the war.

*Treatment:* The film confines itself to one industrial town in the North of England. It shows what has so far been done—both good and bad—and details the essential problems which must be solved in the period of reconstruction after the war. Sensibly enough, the film aims not at the detailing of expert opinion but rather at making the citizenry conscious of their own responsibility as regards planning as well as of the difficulties involved. The style adopted is very pleasant. It consists of a dialogue between two men as they walk through the various areas of "Smokedale" and discuss the things they see. One of the men takes the lead and is virtually the commentator; as he has a particularly attractive Yorkshire accent, everything he says gets home with a punch—notably at the end of the film, when he turns abruptly to the audience and points out that the realisation of the ideas of the planners rests entirely in our own hands.

*Propaganda value:* Very good for the Home Front, particularly since the film makes it clear that plans for the future are bound up with the war effort which we are all engaged in here and now.

(Continued on page 95)

## PUBLIC RELATIONSHIP FILMS LIMITED

### INCORPORATING EVERYMAN FILMS

**New Address:**

57 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

**Telephone: GERRARD 7345**

## FILMS NEARING COMPLETION

**WE SPEAK TO INDIA  
YOUNG AND HEALTHY  
BELIEVE IT OR NOT**

**Ministry of Information  
Central Council for Health Education  
Red Cross and St. John War Organisation**

**RICHARD MASSINGHAM** - **Chairman of Directors**  
**LEWIS GRANT WALLACE.** **Director & Company Secretary**

# POST-WAR CULTURE

Reprinted by courtesy of the Carnegie Endowment  
for International Peace, New York City

THE SUBJECT of intellectual co-operation may sound out of place after the picture of necessary reconstruction in the basic services such as the distribution of food, housing, sewage, water supply, and resettlement, or even in relation to the education essential to the development of a peaceful society within the Nazi- and Fascist-dominated countries of Europe. And, since all co-operative planning must be global, because devastation and disorganization extends to Asia as well as to Europe, the material problems of the period of reconstruction appear to be so gigantic as to exclude other considerations.

Yet, if we consider China first, we will be reminded that the Chinese, even after the scorched earth policy, preserved their educational institutions, if not their educational establishments, and have transported some of their laboratory and library equipment with them in order to continue their educational and cultural life. Moreover, publications on the higher levels of scholarship have in some cases been maintained. In the reconstruction interval in the Far East, therefore, assistance should be given for the continuance of all phases of cultural and intellectual life, else such of the precious heritage of civilisation will be forfeited.

The situation after the last war was simple in comparison with what we must anticipate after this one; for more schools and universities, libraries and laboratories, have suffered destruction and disorganisation than formerly. The training of teachers will perhaps be more necessary than finding housing and equipment. Nevertheless, co-operative projects for the equipment essential to study and investigation will have to be undertaken.

The use of educational motion pictures at all levels as well as within schools must be provided for. Preparation for this exigency should be begun now within and among the countries that are not yet experiencing war inside their territorial boundaries. Standards of evaluation should be agreed upon, and institutes created or accrediting, storing, and distribution of such film libraries. Canada has done a good job even in a war-time in developing this field of activity. It is not too much to ask that educational institutions and agencies in the United States and in Latin America should work actively and co-operatively here and now, setting up institutes for evaluation and distribution, in preparation for his form of intellectual co-operation, for the subject matter of the films can be extended to teaching improved methods of agriculture and other essential tasks of rehabilitation as well as to the general content described as the social sciences—geography, history, and economic, social and political relations.

Something similar should be undertaken in the field of educational broadcasting. Schools of the air of various sorts will need to be established and maintained. The success that Columbia has had in the use of radio in mass education suggests possibilities at the lowest educational levels. Some of the developments in the United States in the dissemination of public addresses and educational forums, such as the University of

Chicago Round Table, only indicate the range of opportunity. The possibility of distributing electrical recordings of good educational content suggests the present need for the establishment of special libraries of educational electrical transcriptions comparable to the institutes proposed as clearing-houses for educational films.

The re-establishment of museums, including folk museums, and the encouragement of education and activities in the field of music are measures essential to the restoration of the cultural life of various peoples. Such re-establishment will contribute to their morale, and to their consciousness of identity and worth, for among Europeans, as among Asiatics, even the peasants have pride in their own particular heritage.

The pioneer work that was done under the direction of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation in the early nineteen-twenties for facilitating exchange of information concerning scientific and scholarly work may not have to be repeated in exactly the same form; instead it may be essential to provide the ways and means for the continuation of scholarly investigations, and to reopen the channels for the exchange of ideas. The American Library Association, anticipating one of the needs, has collected files of educational and scientific journals, which will be forwarded to libraries and universities in the war areas after reconstruction can be begun. This isolated project is but illustrative of the possibility of beginning here and now, in order to be ready for immediate and effective action when the opportunity offers.

Many associations in their individual capacity can and will do much. But the task is too large to be left to individual initiative or private enterprise. Perhaps the best method of procedure would be through the establishment of an International Cultural Relations Committee to parallel the International Labour Organisation, an International Health Agency, and such groupings in the economic field as will be immediately essential. A Cultural Committee could have divisions, sections, authorities or boards, depending upon the choice of nomenclature; and these divisions, with the assistance of representatives of related international bodies that now exist, and suitable representatives from the United Nations, should plan and provide for the administration necessary for carrying out the planning in the following fields:—

Education: its content and personnel; educational equipment; a related matter; interchange of educational films and educational radio broadcasting, as a means of re-education for those beyond school age as well as within the curriculum; re-establishment and re-conditioning of museums and the loaning and interchange of art; support of musical opportunities and activities; encouragement of scholars and scientific work with provision for the exchange of information concerning their findings. Such a correlated group of correlating agencies might evolve into a permanent body, if its programme were well directed.

Although intellectual co-operation has sometimes been thought of as something removed

from the life of the multitude, in reality it embraces the programme and content of education from the elementary stages through adult education, both formal and popular, including the exchanges of the most erudite groups of scholars. Formerly, correlation in all these fields was handicapped by diversities of national practice and set political patterns; the post-war situation will offer the opportunity, the necessity, and the challenge to rebuild for and in terms of education for life in a co-operating world society.

All this will take funds and effort, and the programme to a degree must be applied to the United Nations as well as to the "occupied areas". But intellectual co-operation with re-education will be essential to the functioning of a reconstructed economic, social, and political order.

## CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR,

Dear Sir,

Because the shorts film business is working to capacity the powers that be seem to assume it is happy. But a more careful scrutiny of the situation would reveal that documentary isn't getting a fair deal.

I should say at a guess that eighty per cent of documentary workers are technically expert, that seventy per cent are ethically and socially honest, and that (taken all in all) around sixty per cent are downright capable from whatever angle they are viewed.

Yet in growing measure do we come up against a bureaucratic interference from Government sponsors who, only rarely, are qualified to take a hand in technical matters of presentation and treatment, and even less often are capable of deciding approach and questions of subject matter.

Arrant ineptitude and a mistaken sense of values have for too long characterised the majority of sponsors, both civil and military. To any less vigorous industry such a situation would cause no alarm, but to documentary this surely must become untenable. It is nothing less than a challenge to its very *raison d'être*.

The labourer is worthy of his hire, but, more than this, the expert is worthy of his opinion—worthy of his knowledge and experience.

All this is counted for naught among the petty martinets, and apart from the fact that the right message is not being put over, nor the full scope of the medium exploited—it can be stated that the time wasted over inessential details is directly sabotaging the war effort.

By analogy, would the Press feel satisfied were they similarly placed? They may have to rely upon Government departments for most of their material, but they can virtually present it and interpret it in any way they please. Editorial comment is still, thank God, their birthright.

Nor is the Newsreel shackled by the mailed fist of sponsorship. It is a sign of the times that the Denham workers have taken the matter into their own hands and made a forthright statement of what was in their minds. If necessary we must all be prepared to do the same.

Documentary has always prided itself—and justified itself—by the ability to say something potent and significant, and to say it with skill. That it should now have to suffer dictation from puppets and jacks in office with inferior qualifications, will if allowed to continue, evaporate that peculiar quality of documentary which has always been its essence.

(Continued on page 92)

## CORRESPONDENCE

(continued)

I think one can safely say that shorts technicians would accept without cavil a much more tightly regimented working day; would be prepared to work for less money were this deemed necessary; but one thing which must be wholly abhorrent to them is a dictatorship and interference beyond the minimum that is really essential. For the situation wherein experienced men are being "told their business" by inexperienced upstarts is rapidly approaching a state of farce.

I can say from bitter experience that unless one is prepared to fight—and fight hard—almost every inch of the way, the production in hand will either be meddled with until it is incoherent, or be out of date by the time it is eventually finished. It is only natural that many directors in the end give up the ghost, and let the customer always be right; it is akin to letting the baby poison itself, but at least it prevents our asylums becoming overcrowded.

Continued interference over infinitesimally small points soon kills that goodwill and initiative without which any film becomes a dull catalogue of events.

It is my belief that unless some concerted action is soon undertaken there is every chance that at least three quarters of the films being made will become sterile and valueless.

On the purely instructional side the Forces need a large number of good, straightforward, quickly made, training films, with the minimum spit and polish—not a series of dolled up bastardised "glamour" films (played down to the intelligence of the lowest nitwit) which neither train nor amuse.

And although few technicians would in peace time cherish the thought of turning out films that weren't "one hundred per cent" (or as near as dammit)—I think most of them are today alive to the fact that a little less shine and a deal more speed bring results that more than compensate for any lack of "finish".

For every one man who knows his job in any Government film department, there are a hundred who don't. Why is it that everyone thinks he knows how to make a film?

Playing at the game is a pernicious enough habit even in peacetime, but in war it is unpardonable. For instance, the time wasted in printing and re-printing to produce a spotless show copy, before the release of a training film to the troops is allowed to proceed, is nothing short of scandalous.

The qualifications for entry into government film departments are far too loose and often quite invalid, and even where our film officers are intelligent they are in too many cases completely untrained for the specialised job in hand. In consequence films are not being allowed to pull their mighty weight, and fight. Documentary must insist upon the full mobilisation of its resources and their correct use—or die in the attempt.

If we believe in the medium that we have built up over the years, if we believe in its function—then let us gear it to the present task, and fight till it is established as an all conquering arm, fit to take its place alongside its blood brothers; for anything less than this deserves its immobilisation, and the conscription of its man-power into the Services.

Yours, etc.,

DARREL CATLING.



MAY 1st, '41—

MAY 1st, '42

## FIVE MINUTERS

Visit from Canada

News Train

Victory Over Darkness

Filling The Gap

Work Party

## NON-THEATRICALS

(1 Reel)

Living With Strangers

When The Pie Was Opened

Canadian Fighters

Cultivation

Storing Vegetables Indoors

Storing Vegetables Outdoors

Compost Heap

Hedging

Ditching

Good Value

Canada in London

## SPECIALS

Plastic Surgery in Wartime

(Three Reels Technicolor)

Plastic Surgery

(Supplement 1 Reel)

Goodbye Yesterday

(2 Reels)

The Harvest Shall Come

(4 Reels)

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W.1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

From the **Sheffield Trades Technical Societies** comes an interesting catalogue of regular shows of technical films, held twice a week at the Central Library. This enterprising move covers all types of subject, as the following two specimen programmes show:—

**Tool Steel:** manufacture of tool steel; high frequency and crucible melting, forging, etc., at the works of Messrs. Edgar Allen & Co. Ltd. **The Milling Machine:** construction, operation and uses; milling cutters; right and wrong methods; fixing and setting the job. **The Manufacture of Edge Tools:** processes in the making of edge tools at the works of Messrs. Wm. Marples and Sons Ltd. **The Weigh of the World:** historical survey of weighing devices from early primitive types to modern testing machines for metallurgical purposes. **Strong Silent Axles:** making motor car rear axles for the Austin car; drop forging, casting, welding and machine cutting the spiral bevel wheels, pinions, etc. **Aircraft Design:** use of wind tunnel; forging and heat treatment of light alloys for construction; scenes of planes taking off, flying and aerobatics; Metallurgical Department at National Physical Laboratories. **Air Operations:** a raid on Germany by the Bomber Command (M.O.I.). **Top of the World:** wonderful scenery in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. **The Use of Power:** man's development of power from wood cog wheels, windmills and water wheels, to the modern steam turbine and motor car. **Faraday:** the discovery by Faraday of electro-magnetic induction is reconstructed, together with other inventions. **Night Mail:** the journey of the "Postal Special". **How the Post Office deals with the night mail** by up-to-date methods. **As Time Goes By:** a historical survey of transport, the horse coach, early teamship, railway and modern steamship transport. **Moscow:** scenes in the city—the Kremlin, underground railway, the shops, the main streets. **Strong Point 42:** Soviet guerrillas and troops reduce a Nazi strong point.

The number of films shown in this way between March 12th and May 21st was no less than 111. An M.O.I. film is usually included in each programme.

The **Belfast Film Institute Society** has its last show of the season in May with *Musical Story* and a supporting programme of Russian newsreels and documentary shorts. The last of the Monthly Film Bulletins for the season was sent out at the beginning of June and the annual general meeting was held on June 10th to hear the Treasurer's and Secretaries' reports, and to elect officers and committee for the next season. In retrospect the past season has been very satisfactory as eight shows have been given as against the six usual in peace-time, and some of them have been of exceptional quality both as regards feature films and supporting shorts. So far it has not been necessary to revive any films previously shown, though the choice, particularly of French films, is growing limited. French comedies such as *La Femme du Boulanger* remain still much the most popular films, despite the interest

taken in Russian productions. The most promising event of the season was the Society's good luck in finding a home in a cinema again after an exile of three years in a public hall. To have comfortable seating is a great boon, and the better technical reproduction of sight and sound were highly appreciated. Financially the Society broke even on the season, ending with a tiny balance almost exactly the same as the one with which the winter began. In the next few weeks much work is to be done to plan a new series of shows and in September the publication of the monthly Film Review will be resumed and a prospectus of the coming season will be circulated to members.

The **Merseyside Film Institute Society** lost all its possessions and records when its offices in Bluecoat Chambers were gutted by fire, May 3rd, 1941. Its sectional activities would in any case have been cramped by the war, but the equipment of the new Philharmonic Hall (completed 1939, and generally pronounced to be the finest and most comfortable concert hall in the country) with first-rate projection and sound-track, has at least enabled the Society to attract an intelligent public for special occasions. *Lenin in October* was shown on a Sunday afternoon in January, in co-operation with British Council House, and *Film and Reality* on a week-day evening in May. An U.S.S.R. film will be shown in July. Over 4,000 secondary school pupils in one day were entertained to a 1½ hours programme of carefully selected "shorts" at a small charge per head, at the end of last July and last December; and a similar programme is planned for still larger numbers this term.

The arrangement being made by the Liverpool Philharmonic Society to part with the total ownership of its hall to the Corporation, in return for a large subsidy, and to devote its energies entirely to the promotion of music on an abundant scale, provides a challenge to the M.F.I.S. to step in and develop the cinematographic possibilities of the hall on a similar scale, when peace returns, in co-operation with the Education Department, various educational and social movements, scientific societies, etc.

Temporary address (Hon. Sec. and Hon. Treas.), B22 The Temple, Dale Street, Liverpool.

Plans are in hand for a big increase of Soviet propaganda films to be available for distribution through the machinery of the Workers' Film Association.

Additional screening units are being installed so that with the appointment of agents in various parts of the country, at least twenty film shows can be projected simultaneously. The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd., having become agents for Scotland, the extension of the field of coverage has been considerably increased. The prospective activities of the Association include a Film School at Oxford from July 18th to 24th inclusive, when the lecturers will be Anthony Asquith, Ivor Montagu, Ritchie

Calder, George Pearson, Joseph Reeves, Pat Mannonck and Oliver Bell.

For the purpose of catering for a growing public interested in the film as a medium of education, a Week-End School is being held on Saturday and Sunday, September 26th and 27th, at the Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, W.C.1, at which Mr. Herbert Marshall has been invited to lecture on "What we have to learn from Soviet Films" and Basil Wright on *Film and Reality*. Anthony W. Bingham has been asked to open a discussion on "Modern Documentary Films". On September 5th and 6th, at the same hotel, a continuous programme of films will be exhibited for the benefit of those who wish to hire films next season. The show will start at 10 a.m. on Saturday and continue till Sunday evening. It is intended to display all new releases of Soviet films during the week-end. The Association has now come to an agreement with the Film Unit of the London Co-operative Society Ltd. (Pioneer Films) whereby all films produced by that Unit are to be distributed through the library of the Association. The W.F.A. has agreed to place the production of 16 mm. films (direct recording) with this unit when the approval of sponsors has been obtained, and in return the unit will agree that the bodies associated with the Workers' Movement should only be approached through the W.F.A. Ltd.

S.O.S. for copies of

## WORLD FILM NEWS

We should like to buy for 2s. 6d. each, copies of the following numbers of

## WORLD FILM NEWS

No. 1. Vol. I

No. 4. Vol. I

No. 5. Vol. II

Please send copies to

D.N.L., 34 SOHO SQUARE  
LONDON, W.1



# NEWS & SPECIATED THEATRE ASSOCIATION SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR JUNE/JULY 1942

Week commencing		Week commencing	
A Dog in the Orchard	July 5th	March of Time No. 11—7th Year. New England's 8 Million Yankees	28th
The Classic, Hammersmith, W.6		The Classic, S.W.1	28th
A.I. at Lloyd's	June 21st	The Classic, Portsmouth	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Manchester		March of Time—7th Year, No. 12	June 28th
A Qua Play	July 5th	The Tatter Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	28th
A Star is Hatched		The Tatter Theatre, Birmingham	28th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	12th	The Classic Cinema, South Croydon	28th
A Sleeper Awake	5th	March of Time No. 12—America's New Army	28th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle		The News Theatre, Aberdeen	July 12th
Australia Marches with Britain	June 21st	The News Theatre, Nottingham	12th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	21st	March of Time No. 13—7th Year. Far East Command	12th
The Classic Cinema, South Croydon		The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	12th
Barry and Steam Buggy	July 12th	Meet the Champ	12th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle		The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	5th
Bravest of the Brave	June 21st	The News Theatre, Manchester	5th
World's News Theatre, W.2		The News Theatre, Birmingham	12th
Call of Canada	21st	Memories of Europe	21st
The News Theatre, Birmingham	21st	The News Theatre, Nottingham	21st
The News Theatre, Manchester	28th	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	21st
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	28th	The News Theatre, Bristol	28th
Capital Sidelight	21st	Modern Highway	21st
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne		The News Theatre, Leeds	21st
Cash and Carry	21st	Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Chester	21st	The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	28th
Coastline	July 5th	Natives, U-Boats	12th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen		The News Theatre, Birmingham	12th
Court Favourites	5th	The News Theatre, Manchester	12th
The Classic, Hendon, N.W.4		Nightingale	13th
Crazy House	June 29th	The News Theatre, Leeds	13th
The News Theatre, Leeds		Northern Neighbours	21st
Cuckoo I.O.	21st	The News Theatre, Aberdeen	21st
The Tatter Theatre, Chester		Old MacDonald Duck	21st
Czechoslovakia March On	July 5th	Of Pups and Puzzles	21st
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	5th	The Tatter News Theatre, Liverpool	21st
The News Theatre, Leeds	13th	World's News Theatre, W.2	28th
Dartmouth	June 21st	The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne		Old MacDonald Duck	29th
Dizzy Doctors	July 12th	The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	21st
The Tatter Theatre, Chester		The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	21st
The Tatter Theatre, Liverpool	12th	The Tatter Theatre, Manchester	29th
Victoria News Theatre, S.W.1	28th	The News Theatre, Leeds	29th
Down Window of the Navy	28th	On the Beach	29th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen		The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	29th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	July 5th	Out of the Darkness	29th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	12th	The Tatter News Theatre, Liverpool	29th
Dragon Fly	June 28th	Pampas Paddocks	21st
The News Theatre, Birmingham		The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	21st
The Tatter Theatre, Chester	28th	Peaceful Quebec at War	28th
The News Theatre, Manchester	28th	The News Theatre, Manchester	28th
Eyes on Brazil	28th	Pest Pilot	22nd
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1		The News Theatre, Leeds	22nd
Faithful for Ever	21st	Playing with Neptune	22nd
The News Theatre, Nottingham		The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	22nd
Fun on Rollers	July 12th	Piano Prodigious	21st
The News Theatre, Manchester		The News Theatre, Aberdeen	21st
Gay Nineties	June 21st	Private Life of a Bone	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Manchester		The News Theatre, Nottingham	28th
Gallopin Gals	28th	Quiz Kids No. 1	21st
The Tatter Theatre, Manchester		The Tatter Theatre, Manchester	21st
Ghost Treasure	12th	Recovery	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Manchester		The News Theatre, Aberdeen	28th
Glacier Trail	28th	Requiem for Dixie	28th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle		The Tatter Theatre, Chester	28th
Going Places	July 12th	Road in India	28th
The News Theatre, Nottingham		The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	28th
Green Girdle	June 28th	Sagebrush and Silver	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Chester		The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
Happy Days	5th	The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	28th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne		The News Theatre, Birmingham	28th
Hobby Horses	12th	Screen Snapshots No. 99	21st
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle		The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	21st
Host to a Ghost	June 22nd	Shampoo Springs	21st
The News Theatre, Leeds		The News Theatre, Aberdeen	21st
How Goes Chile?	21st	Shooting Mermaids	21st
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1		The Tatter Theatre, Birmingham	28th
Hundred for One	July 5th	Shores	28th
Classic, S.W.17		The Tatter Theatre, Manchester	28th
The Classic Cinema, South Croydon	5th	Snow Dogs	12th
The Classic, Southampton	5th	The Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	28th
Hysterical Hodgepodge of American History	June 21st	The News Theatre, Bristol	28th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle		The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	28th
I'll Never Crow Again	28th	So You Think You Know Music	21st
The News Theatre, Birmingham		The Tatter Theatre, Birmingham	28th
The News Theatre, Leeds	21st	The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	28th
I Love to Singa	28th	Speaking of Animals	12th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle		The News Theatre, Nottingham	12th
Imperial Delhi	28th	Sporting Mermaids	5th
Eros Theatre, W.1		Story of Dr. Jekyll	28th
India Durbars	21st	Eros Theatre, W.1	28th
The Classic, Hammersmith, W.6		Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	28th
In the Zoo	28th	Stranger than Fiction	21st
The Tatter News Theatre, Manchester		The News Theatre, Nottingham	28th
World's News Theatre, W.2	July 5th	The News Theatre, Birmingham	28th
The News Theatre, Leeds	15th	Sun Fun	28th
Jungle Fishing	5th	Tadpole Songs and Dances	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Birmingham		The News Theatre, Aberdeen	28th
The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	12th	Tea Up	28th
King of the Turf	21st	The Tatter News Theatre, Newcastle	28th
The Tatter Theatre, Manchester			
Listen to Britain	29th		
The News Theatre, Leeds			
The Tatter Theatre, Manchester	July 5th		
March of Time, No. 10—7th Year. The Argentine Question			
The Classic, Portsmouth	June 21st		

## SIGHT and SOUND

### Film Societies!

Thanks to a new arrangement, the London Film Society's collection of films is now with the British Film Institute.

The Institute is also ready to help and advise on next season's programmes.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,  
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(Continued from page 90)

**Water.** G.B. Instructional Ltd. for Imperial Chemical Industries. *Direction:* Mary Field. *Camera:* Jack Parker and Percy Smith. Ten minutes.

**Subject:** The elementary physics and chemistry of water. All the everyday things around us contain water yet water is rarely found pure; the minute quantity of impurity contained in water is often the very thing which gives it a particular property; water does perhaps more than any other part of our physical environment to condition the way in which we live.

**Treatment:** The film is set in a framework of naive question and simple answer, both voices originating with unseen commentators. The questions and expressions of incredulous surprise are sometimes on the stupid side and the answers faintly patronising. The film does, however, deal satisfactorily and clearly with the assorted points raised. The visual demonstrations—as, for example, the diagrammatic illustration of the water-content of certain simple objects—are lively and help to hold the general interest of the film from beginning to end.

**Instructional value:** This film never appears to be absolutely clear about what precise scientific ground it is trying to cover and for what level of intelligence. As a miscellany of tit-bits of interesting information it will, however, whet the appetite for further knowledge of a subject too vast to be tackled in such a limited footage.

**Work Party.** *Production:* Realist Film Unit, with the Herrick Family. *Director:* Len Lye. *Assistant Director:* Bert Pearl. *Camera:* A. E. Eakins. *Director of Music:* Dr. Meyer. M.O.I. Five minutes.

**Subject:** The work of women in munition factories.

**Treatment:** The film is built round a large family of which the mother and a whole covey of daughters are all engaged in a factory turning out gun barrels. One of the daughters is having her twenty-first birthday, and the factory scenes which form the central part of the film are framed in the morning and evening reactions to the birthday event. This is a good enough idea in itself, but unfortunately, the home scenes have been shot in such a way that they give an impression of indescribable drabness and sordidity which is not merely unfair to the people in the film but also the people who have to see it. The crowded party scene at the end might just have come off had the sound track been built up with a really popular current song instead of a fairly esoteric swing record. Something like "Knees up, Mother Brown" or even "The Lambeth Walk" might have saved the situation. But as it is, the whole film is anything but a recommendation for or of factory workers. It must be added that the factual shots of the workers are very well photographed.

**Propaganda value:** Nil or even minus.

## STRAND TO FILM THE BRAINS TRUST

**R**ADIO'S most popular feature . . . The Brains Trust . . . is to be filmed by the Strand Film Company.

Dr. C. E. M. Joad, Commander Campbell and Dr. Julian Huxley, the three resident members of the Brains Trust and Question-Master Donald McCullough will be appearing in the films; in addition there will be many well-known Guest-members.

Donald Taylor, of the Strand Film Company, will be producing and directing the films in close collaboration with Howard Thomas, producer of The Brains Trust.

The films will all be produced at The British National Studios at Elstree.

## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

*New address:—*

**Offices: 1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.**

Tel.: GERRARD 6301/5.

**Studios: BRITISH NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.**

Tel.: ELSTREE 1644.

NOTE.—Reviews of documentary films represent the opinions of the reviewers and are not necessarily the same as those of the Editorial Board of D.N.L.

# FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made.

F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**, 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Australian Trade Publicity Film Library**, 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3 sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 3 Hanover Street, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1941. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses for 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**British Instructional Films**, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; *Pathé Gazette* and *Pathetones*; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Canadian Pacific Film Library**, 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity**. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

**Central Council for Health Education**. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*. 35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

**Central Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue

yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Dominion of New Zealand Film Library**, 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

**Educational Films Bureau**, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Education General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 34 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vitrobrats*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications, Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak, Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circu-

lation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* films, including *Soldiers with Wings*, *Britain's R.A.F.*, *Dutch East Indies*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester, 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including *Massingham's And So to Work*. *Rome and Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South Africa Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Heaton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts. 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association, Ltd.** Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JULY, 1942

## CONTENTS

MORALE FRONT	97
NOTES OF THE MONTH	98
WAR OF IDEAS	99
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	100
FILM SOCIETIES	101
FILM SCHOOL <i>By Irving Jacoby</i>	102
FILM OF THE MONTH	104
CORRESPONDENCE	105
PROPAGANDA PRINCIPLES	106
SHORTS BOOKINGS	107
FILM LIBRARIES	108

VOL 3 NO 7

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## MORALE FRONT

THE SITUATION in regard to the opening of a second front in Europe is having a most alarming effect upon British morale and also upon inter-Allied relationships. It is not for us here to deal with the purely military feasibility of the second front. Yet as a publication concerned with the function of propaganda in creating a war-winning morale, it is our duty to draw attention to the fact that this is not simply a military question. Perhaps by the time these lines are in print, a second front will have been opened. On the other hand wisdom may dictate that the attempt should not be made this year. Whatever the decision the Government must never forget that the British people believe they have given an undertaking to invade the Continent during the next few months, and if there is to be postponement then the spectre of a dishonoured national pledge will become a very formidable ghost to be laid by our propagandists. There is already sufficient evidence that—whatever the rights and wrongs of the past—the second front issue has become inextricably tied to the morale and to the political unity of the United Nations. Even if this could ever have remained simply a matter for the military experts, it is no longer possible for it to do so. It has deliberately been made a public issue by the Allied Governments and if the public is now to be rejected from second front councils it may prove equivalent to shutting the people out of the war altogether.

It may be argued that the present uncertainties and second front rumours constitute a "war of nerves" against the Germans. It is true that a "war of nerves" exists, but surely it is the Allies who suffer most from it? In Germany, uncertainty in the west is more than balanced by great victories in the east. At this moment the Germans are scarcely fit subjects for psychological warfare. Can we claim as much for ourselves?

In the field of morale the British people appear to be in bewildered retreat. The fact must be faced that if the second front should fail to come into being before the Russians have been forced permanently on to the defensive, British morale would by then have fallen so low here that it is doubtful whether it could recover sufficiently to avert defeat in the inevitably ensuing all-out German attack. No more curious and yet no stronger evidence of this could be found than in the eerie summer-holiday atmosphere that has fallen on the country. At the August Bank-holiday week-end, when the rivers of south Russia ran red with blood, the people of Britain fought their tiny private wars in the corridors of holiday trains. Paddington station became the principal centre of interest on the western front. For this horror let no one blame the people. In their factories they have been working long, gruelling hours and yet have found time in great demonstrations to express their will that the

country play a more martial part. They have called to their leaders for action and if the call has gone unanswered who can object if they seek escape from bewilderment in whatever pale imitation they can find of pre-war holiday pleasures. Yet the fact must be faced that this present situation is having the effect of definitely discouraging the public from attempting to understand the war situation. Has the Minister of Information drawn the attention of his colleagues in the Government to the inevitable consequences of such a discouragement in terms of dwindling support for the war effort?

Let us look at the general picture of British reaction to current events. The common people see in the East every indication that the war (not merely the Russians' war) is being lost at a horrifying pace, while in the West nothing of consequence is being done to save the situation. Yet this growing image of defeat gives rise in the minds of more privileged members of the community to somewhat different thoughts. Lady Astor declares that Russia is fighting not for us but for herself, and goes back into the past in search of latent anti-Soviet feeling. The M.C.C. declines to send a message of greeting to Soviet sportsmen on the ground that it prefers to "keep aloof from anything savouring of politics". In the half-guinea seats of a West End cinema, a newsreel appealing for a second front is received with elegant boos. These occurrences—each small, perhaps insignificant in itself—together become symptoms of another threat to morale. They seem to many perhaps over-sensitive democrats to indicate the existence of a growing attempt to divorce us from the Nazi-Soviet war, even to hark back to appeasement and to peace by negotiation with Hitler. To many anti-fascists in this country and overseas it begins to appear that the political "right" is retreating from the common cause.

There is a third group of the community which sees the situation in a special light. Those small numbers of our Forces who actually are fighting the war in Egypt and in bombers and fighters over Germany and occupied Europe, not unnaturally feel sometimes that the appeal for the second front does not take into account the cost of the efforts we already are making. For many of them the call for the second front is a parrot cry from an ill-informed mass of agitators. Here is a difference of view between soldier and worker which must be tackled before it becomes serious. The breach will only be widened by exaggerating for political reasons the importance of our present military accomplishments. The "dressing-up", for example, of our air-raids on Germany to give them the appearance of a "second front" only adds to the cynicism of the vast majority of idle and impatient servicemen who are even more anxious for a fighting war than are the civilians.

These widely divergent attitudes to the current war situation form



then, a chaotic pattern of morale. The state of national mind which they represent is capable of proving no less disastrous than the Russian defeat. It has been said *ad nauseam* that this war is a battle of wills. How long, if the present situation continues, can we expect the British will to remain strong and united enough for victory?

Any failure on our part to keep Russia in the field as an ally capable of taking the offensive would be interpreted by the common people of Britain as revealing some chronic national weakness throwing open to question the whole democratic ideology. On top of this disaster would come inevitably a breakdown in sympathy and understanding between the Allied partners and the peoples of occupied Europe.

These are the considerations which, as propagandists, we must urge should be counted with the chances of military success or failure for the second front. It may well be that outweighing the risk of military failure and the heavy sacrifice of life involved in an immediate invasion of the Continent is the certainty of a complete breakdown in morale and political alliances if it should fail to be attempted in time. In these circumstances it is surely idle to consider the second front as a purely military question and a matter only for the military experts. It is idle also to say that the only criterion by which the wisdom, or otherwise, of a second front can be decided is whether or not it can be a military success. The second front must be thought of as a part of the military strategy, the political strategy and the morale of the United Nations as a whole. Its chances of success or failure in the west must be balanced with Russia's chances of success or failure in the east, and with the effect of its presence or absence on inter-Allied relationships. More important still is it to remember that a single military failure is less of a threat to the ultimate victory of the United Nations than is a collapse of morale through political weakness. For morale is the decisive weapon.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### Hunting for Material

ONE THING everyone in the movie business is agreed on—and that is the misery of trying to find stock shots or library material. To-day when so many films are being made on subjects for which original material cannot be shot, the problem of finding the material and of getting prints and dupe negatives made is becoming acute. The main sources at present are the newsreels, the Crown Film Unit (which houses all M.O.I. material), and the cut-outs vaults of individual companies. For one reason or another all these sources involve considerable delay. What is needed is a central library of stock shots with an efficient card-index system strong in cross references. This would be an enormous asset to the whole trade as well as to the M.O.I. and it surely should not be difficult to arrange some system of finance. The library would be expensive to set up and moderately costly to maintain, since the secret of such an organisation lies in a large and well-trained staff. But the cost would be amply repaid in terms of time saved. Either the Trade or the Government, or both jointly, should consider some such project.

### Critics on the Air

SUCCESSIVE B.B.C. film critics, airing their Sunday views of the week's films, have usually earned neither praise nor blame. Lilian Duff did indeed draw upon herself the wrath of Wardour Street, by daring to criticise adversely some of their more expensive productions. They contended that a film which had cost many thousands of pounds to make, and on which much time had been spent, should not be criticised on the air, unless the criticism was going to be what has come to be called a "good" criticism. In fact what Wardour Street always wants is a boost, a hunk of praise and a pat on the back. This weakness, which has always been present in this strangely sensitive industry, does the film producers no good service. There are all too few channels of completely unbiased criticism and good,

constructive comment can only help the sound growth of the cinema. We therefore welcome the arrival on the air of Miss C. A. Lejeune, whose film column has, for many years, been a guide to better film going for those who are not content with just "dropping in at the movies". At the moment her performance is more interesting for its matter than for its manner of presentation. The microphone is probably disconcerting after the ordered columns of the *Observer*. But when Miss Lejeune has settled down and learnt that good intentions do not make up for lack of technique, she should do a job that can be of great service to the film industry.

### A Good Move

ALTHOUGH it comes somewhat belatedly, all parties concerned are to be congratulated on the new Order in Council bringing up to date the quota regulations in so far as they affect propaganda films. Two new regulations are embodied. The first exempts from the operation of the Quota Act such foreign short propaganda films as may be exhibited to distributors free of charge. The second regulation enables the Board of Trade to register short propaganda films as British notwithstanding the fact that they contain more foreign or newsreel footage than was formerly allowable. The Order in Council will do much to clear the way for the distribution in this country of such outstanding propaganda from overseas as Canada's "World in Action" series. The development of the type of film which is capable of portraying broad world strategies is perhaps the most urgent task before the film propagandist. It is essential therefore that no obstacle should remain in the way of utilising all relevant film footage, no matter where it may have originated.

### Walter Leigh

THE DEATH of Walter Leigh in the Egyptian campaign has come as a great shock to all those documentary workers (and they are many) who had the advantage of working with him. To the rest of the world Leigh was probably best known as a serious composer of exceptional talent who also had the gift of writing light music of an excellence hardly attained by any other contemporary composer. Partnered by V. C. Clinton Baddeley and Scobie Mackenzie, as librettists, he composed "The Pride of the Regiment" and "Jolly Roger"—two light operas of which the latter proved that there is a large public for intelligence, as well as gaiety, in music. But to all of us in documentary, Leigh meant something much wider and important. When sound recording first became available to the G.P.O. unit at Blackheath it was Leigh, first and foremost, who showed us the path to those experiments in sound which have since become famous. With an enormous grasp and knowledge of music, a fertile imagination, and an astonishing gift for really concentrated work, Leigh evolved a series of sound scores built up not merely out of voice and music but out of the whole range of natural sounds—to say nothing of the many synthetic new noises which he created himself. As he himself often used to say: "In film work I regard all sounds in the world as possibilities for my orchestral score." His masterpiece was the sound-track for *Song of Ceylon*, on a detailed script for which (involving sometimes seven tracks—unheard of in those primitive days) he worked without pause for over three weeks before starting that long series of experiments in the recording studio which so many documentary people who were roped in from time to time remember so vividly. Leigh was too modest ever to admit the fact that without him *Song of Ceylon* would have been little more than an ordinary travelogue; nor has he ever received sufficient recognition for it. Space forbids mention of the many other films on which he worked. The last two scores he composed before he volunteered for the Tank Corps were for Rotha's *The Fourth Estate* and the G.P.O.'s *Squadron 992*. After he joined the Army his help was much missed by workers on documentary films; that he will never work with us again, will never give us the benefit not merely of his talent and imagination but also his companionship and his warm sense of humour, is an irreparable loss. On behalf of everyone in documentary we send our deepest sympathy to his wife and three children.

# WAR OF IDEAS

THE MOST horrifying implication of the debate on the Libya defeat did not emerge until a few days after it was over. By that time the House of Commons had turned its attention to the Ministry of Information and as our leaders carried out a disgracefully perfunctory examination of the national propaganda policy it became clear that they saw no clear relationship between the battle of tanks, guns and aircraft and the battle of ideas.

Members of the House of Commons, from the Prime Minister downwards, are so anxious to discuss the dive-bomber and the anti-tank gun that they seldom pause to consider whether perhaps after all the war is not being won and lost in the minds of men rather than in the sands of Libya and Egypt.

Let us not exaggerate. Success in the field of battle is vital, but attending upon it—or upon the lack of it—is a factor without which final victory is impossible. We can only survive military defeats and win the war if we mobilise and use one weapon which never is out of date—the weapon of the public will.

It cannot be denied that the Libya debate provided a propaganda dilemma. It was going to be more difficult after it to ask the workers to continue to make heavy sacrifices when so much of their past efforts seemed to have been useless. Yet any propagandist worth his salt (and who was also fighting the war on behalf of the people) would have recognised the situation as providing a propaganda dilemma capable of conversion into a great propaganda opportunity. The debate on the Ministry of Information which followed showed that there was no propagandist in the House who recognised and was prepared to use that opportunity. The revelation of incompetence in high places was not to be used as a challenge to the people to put their house in order; it was to be skated over whilst members orated for hours, not about the basic policy, but about the tactics and machinery of propaganda. This is not a war between countries: it is a world revolution. It has to be regarded as the fight of the common man to overthrow the tyranny of privilege and reaction wherever it may be found. In spite of this our Ministry of Information was content smugly to defend itself with piddling accounts of petty successes which affect the outcome of the war neither one way nor the other. The Films Division is still the shiniest apple in Mr. Bracken's basket, but even after picking out his glowing fruit for examination Mr. Thurtell could tell us only of *Target for Tonight*, and a vast number of instructional films. This apparently was all that the Films

Division could find to congratulate itself upon. Lenin has said: "For us the cinema is the greatest of all arts" but for the Ministry of Information the cinema was a new kind of blackboard in the class-room. Instruction is essential and the evolution of the instructional film is a great war-time accomplishment, but it is propaganda we need to win the war.

Enough was said during the propaganda debate to make it clear that the Government does not intend on our propaganda to regard the war as essentially different from a nationalistic war on the old, familiar pattern. There is to be no talk of revolutions. The recent revelations of gross incompetence and neglect on the part of the Ministers whose duty it was to prepare our defence against Fascism are not to be used to establish the danger of entrusting the fate of this country to reactionaries. Not a single speaker in the House has indicated any connection between defeat in Libya and the ideologies of past leadership.

The people of this country are not mobilised for war. The Russian and the German armies believe they see a cause for which a man may properly sacrifice his life. We have no such cause. Singapore surrenders. Sebastopol does not surrender. With no hope of relief Sebastopol fights on hoping not to stop but merely to delay the enemy advance. To keep the Nazis out only for an hour was believed by the people of Sebastopol to be worth hundreds of lives.

✓The people of this country must believe with equal fervour in their cause before there can exist the slightest hope of our victory. It is not sufficient to call upon them to fight to defend the pre-war Britain. It must be recognised that the post-war order for which we must fight will be unwelcome to certain sections of the community. We cannot necessarily count on the co-operation of certain privileged groups. This world of the Common Man which Henry A. Wallace, Vice-President of the United States, has indicated as the goal, will bring material benefit to the vast majority of citizens, but not to all of them. Moreover it is not a world to be built by narrow patriotisms. The patriotic issues belong to the dying traditions of a past age. It is useless to argue that the Russians are fighting for their country in the old sense: their soldiers are fighting to defend a way of life which they themselves have created within their own lifetimes. And the people of Britain will fight with an equal passion when they come to believe, or, better still, *know*, that they

also are fighting to create a new way of life. During the debate on propaganda and subsequently in the Press it has been argued that we must avoid politics in our approaches to the people of enemy and enemy-occupied countries; that, for example, we must appeal only to the Frenchman's love of France, and hope thereby to unite Frenchmen of every political colour in our cause. If we do this we surely throw away the one weapon in our armoury which the Nazis can never match—the weapon of true social progress. Without it we have nothing with which to counter the Nazis' spurious promise of a New Order. Without it we should find ourselves fighting for the past against a conception of the future which—however horrifying—has the strength of looking forward and not backward.

✓We must continue to present to our Allies overseas and to the people of Britain a picture of a future world which will be only in part a product of this current war for liberty. ✓The fight for the world of the Common Man will not finish with the war. The major part of the battle against privilege, exploitation and oppression and the fight for Roosevelt's four freedoms will be fought not across national boundaries but within them. Fascism is only secondarily a phenomenon of international relations. It is primarily an evil existing within each individual community to be stamped out only by the people of that community. It is this picture of continuing revolution, with the war as one of its phases, that must become the rallying cry for the freedom-loving people of the world. It is the task of the propagandist to present the war, not simply as a defensive struggle against evil forces, but as a great opportunity to move forward. The people of the world have never been more ready to listen to the advocate of social progress. Defensive tactics in political warfare are doomed from the start to failure, and we must therefore wrest the ideological offensive from the Nazis. We must declare to the world that through Allied victory there exists an unprecedented opportunity not to re-build the pre-war world but to re-design it. Here then is the task of the propagandist.

Whenever we are told that "propaganda" is something abhorrent to decent people and that we can do without it, let us remember that the word was originally used and must still be considered in relation to a faith—"De Propaganda Fide." Let there be no mistake about it, this war will be won not simply by tanks, planes and guns, but by whichever proves to be the stronger of two warring faiths.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Dockers.** Realist Film Unit. *Direction:* Frank Sainsbury. *Production:* John Taylor. *Camera:* A. E. Jenkins. M.O.I. Five minutes. *Subject:* Achievements of the dockers, and their working conditions in wartime.

*Treatment:* With lively novelty, this film confines itself strictly to presenting the dockers from their own point of view. The commentary is spoken by their own accredited representative, and the group of actual dockers who appear in the film fill in the gaps with a number of tough remarks. The film falls roughly into two sections. The first explains the method of employment and reminds us that dockers to-day have little or no choice; they are required to work in any port, however far from their homes, according to the demands of the Government. The method of allocating men to their jobs in a given port is shown in some detail; in mood and *mise-en-scène* it is reminiscent of a cattle auction. On the other hand the film reveals that a minimum wage for all dockers is now in operation, so that if there is no immediate work for, say, some of the older men, they can still draw some money. The second part of the film vividly portrays the operation of unloading a meat ship, and gives a very good idea of the tough work involved. The speed at which ships are turned round (the dockers are breaking records every week) will, backed especially by these visuals, not merely encourage audiences but also impart a strong feeling of admiration for the men on the job. Finally, there is a dialogue payoff which with great good humour rams home the point that these men, doing a hard and often dangerous job, at times far from their homes, rightly resent criticism by people who know nothing about the work.

*Propaganda value:* Good. The film definitely tells the community as a whole a good deal about how one of its sections works. It also clears the mind of contradictions and accusations which arose as a result of the dockers' strikes; in future those who have seen the film will be in a much better condition to make a considered judgment on the problem. More short films of this nature would be a good thing.

**Start a Land Club.** *Production:* Films of Great Britain, Ltd. *Direction:* Andrew Buchanan. *Assoc. Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. Five minutes.

*Subject:* The film shows how it is possible for urban workers to put in their spare time helping farmers, by doing unskilled jobs on the land during week-ends and holidays.

*Treatment:* "I am a farmer" says the commentator, "and I want to tell you about the good work town people are doing by giving us a hand during rush periods and when we are short of labour." We are shown school children, typists, business men, at work on some of the jobs on the land—wedding and planting potatoes, etc. These people belong to land clubs. The organisation of a club and its contacts with the farmers of the district is sketched in lightly. The film ends with an appeal for more, bigger, and better clubs.

The idea of using a farmer as a commentator is an excellent one, though it seemed to be a tactical error not to introduce him visually straightaway instead of waiting till halfway through. Otherwise the film has little originality, and is in fact rather drab, being neither

particularly well shot nor well cut. And why, with a simple rural subject like this, must the title music come booming in like the storm music in some Tod Slaughter melodrama?

*Propaganda Value:* This is quite a worthy subject for a M.O.I. 5 minute. There must be thousands if not millions of people who feel that their regular jobs are so futile that they would like to see their consciences by doing something really useful in their spare time—a fine comment on our war effort. This film certainly creates an interest in the work of land clubs. It also slips in, for those who are listening hard, some information about how to join or start one. It is a pity this information was not more emphasised and elaborated, because it slipped by without most people taking it in, thereby defeating the avowed object of the film.

**The Right Man.** Army Film Unit. M.O.I. Five minutes.

*Subject:* The right man in the right job. The way in which the Army tests men to see that they are fitted into the most suitable work.

*Treatment:* The producers, in spite of lacking confidence in the entertainment value of their subject, have made an interesting film. It was surely unnecessary to drag in an actor to play the part of a major, however well he may have played it, simply so that he could show an American officer round. Their little tour and its accompanying dialogue gives endless opportunity for smug backchat about America and England both doing the same thing.

But the work itself is fascinating, and, although it consists of adaptations of the familiar tests of selection, rejection and fitting together puzzles, it has an excitement all its own. If a little more time could have been spent on the tests and a little less on the padding this film would have been one of the most entertaining five-minute put out so far.

*Propaganda Value:* Forget the framework and the film gives information about an important subject of general interest.

**Troopship.** Army Film Unit. M.O.I. Five minutes.

*Subject:* A record of life on board a troopship, destination unstated.

*Treatment:* Somebody had a camera and the sun shone. That's what it looks like. They shot this and that and everything that was handy. They saw nothing new but they didn't shoot what they did see badly. Physical training, bathing, dancing; the echo of peace-time pleasure cruising. Skimming lightly over the surface, matching the sun with smiling faces, we see the life and the games of a war-time long sea voyage.

The material has been well put together and Richard Adinself's "Hold Your Hats On" lively tune, carries the film gaily over any difficult considerations of recent farewells or grim anticipations of ultimate landfalls. The narrative is in the form of a letter written by one of the soldiers on board and this rather naïve approach works surprisingly well.

*Propaganda Value:* At a time when an increasing number of people's thoughts are with families and friends on the seas, a film which gives information, as this one does, is doing a good propaganda job.

**Rat Destruction.** Paul Rotha Productions. *Directed by:* Budge Cooper. *Camera:* Peter Hennessy. *Musical Director:* William Alwyn. *Subject:* The importance of clearing rats from shopping areas, and how it is done.

*Treatment:* The film ends by asking everyone concerned to consult their local authority about destroying rats, for the main theme is not so much how to destroy rats yourself as a description of the measures which should be taken by the local Rodent Officer when he is brought in to investigate a case. Dispassionately one watches the Rodent Officer (a rather impersonal, municipal sort of Holmes) tracking the rats to a hide-out in an embankment in the suburbs, where in the words of the commentary "a heaped teaspoonful of cyanide" does most of the rest. The whole thing is efficiently done and one gets the impression that no time is lost in destroying them.

The film is on the whole well photographed and shot, though it suffers from a too-literal substantiation of commentary by picture.

**Balloon Site 568.** *Production:* Strand Film Company. *Producer:* Alexander Shaw. *Direction:* Ivan Moffat. *Camera:* Jo Jago. *Script:* Dylan Thomas and Ivan Moffat.

*Subject:* W.A.A.F.'s take over a barrage balloon site.

*Treatment:* A dress shop assistant (blonde sex-appeal), a domestic servant (practical-Scottish), and an office secretary (feminine-efficient), attracted by posters or by friends already in the Service, apply to join the Balloon Service. A pleasant interviewer warns them the job is tough; but they accept it, want to do something more productive than they found their civilian jobs. After some weeks of training—splicing wire cable is tough on the hands, but has got to be learnt just the same—the girls go off to "a place in the country," recognisable to those who saw *Squadron 992*. They get familiar with their floppy elephantine charges. The weird flock of balloons going in to bed makes a striking picture, suggests a whole world of new interests. The girls get along happily with new friends and new jobs. The cheery domestic servant takes to driving a winch; our blonde sex assistant, at a canteen dance, turns down a date—the group is going off to its balloon site next day. It's not an inviting place, in an industrial town, with winter slush underfoot. But they know they are doing important work.

These stages in a balloon girl's training are shown as short episodes; the story flows naturally, usually by a dialogue reference to the next stage. This snappy exposition, and the good technical quality keep interest alert right through. There is a pleasant sound opening of the girls singing one of their choruses.

*Propaganda Value:* A job, which the film admits must at times be hard, even depressing, is shown to be an inviting one. Burdensome military discipline is not to be seen—but the girls drop their sing-song in the recreation but quickly enough when an operational order comes through. The film should bring in recruits to the Service.

There is an important wider issue. Women are ready to don uniform and get down to a job which can be tough. We have moved a little since *Squadron 992* so pleasantly mirrored our then conception of total war.

## FILM SOCIETIES

### First Scientific Films Conference of the Association of Scientific Workers

This Conference in London represented something of a landmark in film history and following important speeches by Mr. Paul Rotha and Dr. Klatzow, the Chairman, Mr. Arthur Elton, summarised the proceedings as follows:—

"The Scientific Film Society movement is now flourishing and has moved from isolated societies and groups into the realms of an organisation which can call a national conference. The importance of this movement and this meeting can be summed up something in this way. To the ordinary man and woman, if you say that you are a bus driver, this means something quite precise. The person you have spoken to can fit you into your environment and can readily understand how you are contributing to the national life. But, if you say that you are a scientist, it's twenty chances to one that the person you speak to will not know where to place you. He may think vaguely that you are a mysterious person not of the common herd who has special powers of magic at your disposal; or he may think of you as someone who is inseparable from a microscope; or he may think of you vaguely as someone who cuts up things; but it's twenty chances to one against his regarding you as a worker like any other worker taking his place in society. The ordinary man does not understand that not only is a scientist working at a job which has no mysteries if you settle down to learn its technique but that he is as much a workman as a man who drives a bus; they just have different jobs. There are routine workers in bus driving and routine workers in the laboratory; there are grades of transport workers culminating, I suppose, in a General Manager responsible for the planning of bus routes; in the same way there are grades of scientists culminating ultimately in a Director of Research.

"You can look at the same problem from another point of view. Just as I believe it to be essential for a scientist to feel himself a worker in the community and for the community to look on him as a man practising a job not so very unlike other jobs, so is it important for the community to look on its own jobs—whatever they may be as scientific jobs. That is, the community must in our present world become a community of scientists. Indeed, the bus driver is driving his bus by practising scientific method: he would never get very far if he started running it on the *a priori* methods of an eighteenth century crafts-

man. The only way in which the people of this country can manage their environment and control it is through understanding it, and the way of understanding it is to learn what I can roughly call the scientific method of approaching it. Everyone can acquire the ability to analyse the workings of the world around them into its parts, to examine each part in relation to the others, and to deduce from these two processes the way to govern and to improve their surroundings. This was important in peace, but it is more than ever important in war. The soldier who has a knowledge of the internal combustion engine and ballistics and metallurgy—and he can acquire these things in broad outline quite easily—is a better soldier. If we are to win the war quickly, every man and woman of us must become a scientist. And one of the ways in which all of us can become scientists is through the scientific film.

"The London Film Society was started about 16 years ago. In those days the film was looked on as a vulgar and horrifying contamination of public taste. We felt otherwise and from that first Film Society performance in London many other Film Societies have sprung. And these Film Societies were not isolated groups of people drawn together to edify themselves. They have raised the whole standard of film production and film appreciation throughout the world—so much so, that today Film Societies must be having difficulty in finding suitable films because the kind of films they want to see are being publicly exhibited in the ordinary cinemas. Small groups like this are pressure points. Imperceptibly they begin to affect people round them. They are catalysts turning the amorphous batch of men and women called the general public into an articulate thinking social organism. If, as I believe, it is essential for the conduct of this war and the conduct of the peace after it for everyone to have a scientific understanding of their environment, then you can be quite sure that one of the ways of achieving this is through the Scientific Film Society, however humble its beginnings. Before you know where you are the cinema manager will be pricking up his ears and beginning to believe that there must be something in all this scientific stuff. And that is what is the real importance of the Scientific Film Movement and of a conference like this—not that the societies are important in themselves, but that they are growing points of public taste and public appreciation and public education."

**Belfast Film Institute Society.** With *Musical Story* and an all-Russian programme the Belfast Film Institute Society finished a season which included *La Marseillaise*, *Chapayev*, *Zero de Conduite*, *Monkey Business*, *Janosik*, *Le Roi S'Amuse*, *Gens du Voyage*, and *La Femme du Boulanger*.

Belfast, with almost as many cinemas as linen mills, still cannot be persuaded to make a cinema available to the Society for an evening programme, and Sunday shows, of course, are still unthinkable. After Spartan times in a hall lacking in creature comforts, however, the Society has found a pukka cinema for Saturday afternoon shows. Remission of Entertainment Duty by the Northern Ireland Government has enabled the Society to pull through financially in spite of high running expenses and low paid-up membership. Future prospects are uncertain, but hopes for another season in the autumn are fairly high. The link with the British Film Institute has proved invaluable.

Some hilarious last-moment excitement was provided by the Security Censorship authorities over *La Femme du Boulanger*, which was sent from London to belligerent Belfast via neutral Dublin and consequently impounded when it crossed the border into Northern Ireland. The censors ran through the film to be sure that it contained nothing likely to undermine the State. No cause for alarm or despondency was noted and the film was released with the censor's blessing to delight the Society's largest audience of the year.

**Liverpool.** The Merseyside Film Institute Society held its annual meeting on July 29th, and elected its committee and officers for the ensuing twelve months. Mr. W. Lyon Bleasie is Chairman, Mr. T. F. Wilson, Hon. Secretary, and Mr. A. E. Harrison, Hon. Treasurer. The Society will continue to give shows in the Philharmonic Hall as and when suitable dates and films can be found, but cannot resume its sectional activities or publication of its bulletin for the time being. It will function, during the war, without an office. Correspondence may be addressed care of "The Bluecoat Society of Arts, Liverpool, 1."

*General Suvorov* was shown by the Society on July 22nd to a large audience, a veritable cross-section of the population—the Russia Today Society helping in the sale of tickets. On the previous day some 4,000 secondary school pupils had come to the same (Philharmonic) Hall—three "houses" in school hours—to enjoy a programme of shorts, organised as previously under the aegis of the Society.

## Spectator Short Films Limited

18 Old Burlington Street,  
W.1.

Tel: Regent 0611.



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3      NUMBER 7  
JULY 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London**, in association with **American Film Center, New York**.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

**FILM CENTRE LTD.**  
**34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON**  
W.1      GERRARD 4253

# FILM SCHOOL

An Account of an American Experiment

By IRVING JACOBY

THE SITUATION was obvious by the end of 1939. If documentary was to grow in the United States it would need new blood—not transfusions, i.e. not imported experts and not expensive names from Hollywood, journalism and Broadway—but a whole new generation of ambitious, believing youngsters. The first generation (contemporary with England's second) was almost through. The documentary idea was spreading in a big, stretched-out country. Some of those who were familiar with the idea were needed to spread it; they had to leave the camera and cutting table to organise, sell and promote. They no longer had time or temperament for painstaking production. Others were envious. Why shouldn't they too (good cameramen, cutters, writers) be graduated into direction, production, promotion? In 1940 half the members of the Association of Documentary Film Producers were jobless because they could not or would not work at their jobs. Paradoxically this unemployment merely disclosed the need to get more people into the field. We were getting too big for our pants. There was no one around to make pictures.

Two needs were apparent. One, technicians. Youngsters who could learn to handle film and film ideas with honesty and professional skill. Two, film users—a new breed of public servant who could administrate film business for government, education and industry—who had the documentary idea in their heads, who could handle film money ethically and efficiently. They would need no more than a working knowledge of the film making techniques, as against a thorough knowledge of audience purpose techniques.

Who would take the trouble to train this new generation? The Association of Documentary Film Producers tried an educational programme, directed at its associate membership. The Rockefeller Foundation, chiefly through American Film Center, gave a few apprentice fellowships to young hopefuls. But neither plan worked—for different reasons in each case; yet in both were these faults: (1) a preoccupation with their own production interests, (2) the absence of a complete and unifying gospel to hand down, the impossibility of reaching an agreement on the word to be preached.

In only one film centre in North America, was there any sign of an organised, directed movement for training youth. And the National Film Board in Ottawa obviously had enough to do. To train the Canadians needed for carrying out a national film programme would be a heroic task in itself.

We had long hoped to have Grierson, or at least part of Grierson, in the States, but with the increasing importance of the Film Board to Canada's war effort such hope gradually faded. Here we had to be content with his advice, criticism and too infrequent blitz visits. But his name cannot be kept off the Institute of Film Techniques' credit cards. He scorned us into action, filed down our vanities, unimpressed our political thinking, and most important, through his work in Canada, gave us vistas of a hopeful future.

It was under such circumstances that we accepted the invitation of the City College of New York to introduce a series of co-ordinated extension courses that would be specifically planned to fill the personnel needs of our own field. We were to provide a curriculum. We were to give the instruction. To all of us it was a question of working in film during the day and of teaching at night. For from the beginning it was understood that academism and amateurism could be avoided only by confining the instructional staff to active professionals.

We divided the work into three series of courses: A—Use, B—Production, C—History (as related to Use and Production). Each series began with a general orientation course, broad, theoretical, cathartic and setting a pattern for practical instruction to follow. In "A" this orientation course was called THE FILM AT WORK, in "B" INTRODUCTION TO FILM PRODUCTION, in "C" TRENDS IN FILM PROGRESS. The titles are self-explanatory, but the basic courses have a two-fold purpose that should be explained, that derived from the fact that the Institute was open to all comers, to professionals, amateurs, and kids with nothing more than an impulse. The first courses were to act as levellers—were to enable us to begin at a beginning, taking nothing for granted, and possibly to help us to arrive at a similarity of thought and judgment hitherto lacking in this country. It was a matter of giving the students a common vocabulary, not of trying to push them into a preconceived mould.

The second course in each series involved grappling with specific film problems. In "A" it was called FILM AND EDUCATION. Audiences of various levels are assigned to groups of students, who aim films at them, varying approaches, checking effectiveness, working out non-film tie-ups, fitting film into established curricula or programmes, learning the mechanics of using film libraries and projection equipment, and learning to analyse specific audiences in film terms rather than the other way around.

In the "B" series the second course is WORKSHOP. Small student units make films themselves under the supervision of an experienced film maker, filling the positions in the unit according to their own preferences, talents and experience. In our original plans the films were to be made in 35 mm. size. The war, with its priority handicaps, and a concomitant perfecting of 16 mm. equipment, may alter this. In "C" the second course is FILM CRITICISM, in which standards and criteria in other art forms are broken down with a view to applying their elements to our medium. Leading architects, sculptors, musicians, dramatists help the students approach films with logical and aesthetic objectivity. (This is one play course against a dozen devoted to work.)

The third course in each series is a continuation of the general-to-the-particular process. In Use, the course is FILM PROPAGANDA in which the students are trained to organise audiences and film materials for specific campaigns on various sections of the community, using both theatrical and non-theatrical technique. In Production, the students begin to specialise as production assistants, specific courses being offered in photography, editing, sound recording and writing. In the History sequence, the students begin to apply their critical findings to production and distribution problems. The fourth semester is composed of honours courses in which the students act as undergraduate teachers in the basic courses of their specialisation.

The instructional staff is drawn from the body of documentary people according to availability. This year, the students heard Grierson, Legg, Evans, Flaherty, Steiner, Ferno, Rodakiewicz, Lerner and about a dozen others. Next term some of these men will repeat, and people like Van Dyke and Kanin who have been on location will take the place of those no longer in the city. This is one of the advantages of working in a centre like New York, through which film makers are constantly coming and going.

But more important than curriculum, instructors or facilities are the students. At the beginning of this term registration had to be closed (for reasons of physical capacity) when the enrolment totalled 185. Ages ranged from 17 to 55 although most of the students were between 20 and 25. A number of them were undergraduates of local colleges and universities. Many were still photographers, teachers, publicity men. There were other professionals from medicine, journalism, and the fine arts, but most of the students were high school and college graduates employed throughout the city in the type of small, unfulfilling job to which post-depression youth has been limited.

A large part of each class was made up of people now employed in the film industry. Some work at present in subordinate positions in local laboratories, studios, and distribution plants, but some are directors, cameramen and writers who wanted a review

of the groundwork of film making or an idea of what documentary production was all about.

Most amazing was the effort and enthusiasm which lasted throughout the term. Attendance was exceptionally regular and assigned work was done with a seriousness rarely encountered in extension courses. The examination papers, written at the end of the term, were startling as a manifestation of the students' comprehension, adaptability and general intelligence. Of the 125 registered in the Production Course, at least 50 could be turned into competent film makers in a short time.

Most of the students came from poor families, for although small fees were charged for Institute courses, the City College is a municipal institution which offers free higher education. Because such youngsters cannot afford to buy their own cameras or raw stock, because they have no social connections that might help them get film jobs, the Institute will open the door to a new type of film maker, too rarely found in the field at the present time. Considering the nature of the films that concern us and the necessity for complete co-ordination between film makers and the community, we believe it is most important that this door be opened and kept open.

It is worth mentioning that on a number of occasions when we showed films dealing with social problems to these students, they took the conditions shown on the screen for granted, and reacted very differently from the usual sympathetic but distant audience. If films are to be used among the people from whom these students come, for the making of a better post-war world, certainly it would be an advantage to have their knowledge of class idiom and their instinctive pattern of approach to certain subjects.

Another aspect of the Institute's connection with the City College is of interest. A faculty committee of professors in the arts, sciences, and education serves in an advisory and administrative capacity. The Institute is not, then, an isolated professional school. It is part of the stream of diversified intellectual activity of a democratic educational institution. It is able to draw on the specialised talents and training of experts in languages and literature, education, psychology, the sciences and the social sciences. The results of such co-operation will be of value to film workers and educators alike. Research projects and experimental investigations become inexpensive and feasible. The effectiveness of a film teaching a special skill can be studied in the appropriate laboratories; films that deal with broader subjects can be shown to classes of all levels and types, and their effectiveness gauged under scientific controls.

Finally, because of the relation between the City College and the municipality, the Institute is in a position to serve as a production unit working in close co-operation

with city, state and federal governmental agencies using films. Production services can be offered on a non-profit basis, and distribution problems can be analysed in terms of metropolitan audiences and nearby rural centres. Instructions can then be co-ordinated to professional work in hand and have all the advantages that are typified by medical education co-ordinated to hospital practice. It is the system of learning by doing that worked so well in Moscow in the 20's, in Soho Square in the 30's and is working again in the 40's on the banks of the Ottawa River.

But shortly after the plans described above were conceived and put into operation, America went to war. What had been an internal problem for the documentary people became a pressing need of the community. The federal government alone started at least 25 huge film programmes, some of them requiring as many as 500 highly skilled employees.

Civilian departments, as well as the armed services, were required to turn out and distribute vast numbers of special films. Quickly they absorbed all of the slack in the personnel market and had to begin the retraining of certain types of workers. Hollywood became the favourite source of technicians, who, although willing to give up their fabulous salaries for a chance to participate in the war effort, found their lavish working habits a handicap in government film production. Although the documentary film makers were first regarded with suspicion because of their political views, most of them have, by now, found jobs because of the general scarcity. Film technicians' labour unions (laboratory workers, in particular) have organised campaigns to recruit workers to the film field. Rich and powerful government agencies are forced to employ amateur cameramen on important expeditions. The day has come in documentary when the demand for film makers exceeds the supply.

The same situation is true in the field of film use. In the short period the United States has been at war, government officials have already found out how difficult it is to get effective distribution of their product. Particularly in the use of civilian and military training films, a bottleneck was discovered in the lack of visual education experts who could put the films to work on the jobs for which they had been made. In many army training camps and in many civilian technical training schools good films are resting on shelves because officers and instructors have not the time to learn how to use them properly. Production all down the line has outpaced distribution.

But these technical troubles must not conceal from us the fact that a great forward step has been taken. Official America had never been really conscious of the potentialities of documentary; the war has made the difference. Not only are the potentialities evident, but films are actually in use. They will never

(Continued on page 105)

## FILM OF THE MONTH

### The Young Mr Pitt

FACED WITH the problem of reviewing an historical film, the critic can either search the shelves to see what somebody else has written, and then smartly tick the producers off for using a wimple instead of a snood, or he can forget history and treat it as film entertainment only. Either course is difficult. If it is bad history, it only serves to obscure the so necessary lessons of cause and effect, and if it is good entertainment, it is all the better if it treats history with respect. The films which showed Marie Antoinette as an arch flirt, Henry the Eighth as a blustering lecher, Queen Victoria as a doting *hausfrau* and domineering dotard, would have been none the worse for also showing them in historical perspective. The way in which the school text books avoid the real meaning of history, which is no dull subject, in favour of the highly coloured and the high born, is faithfully copied by most historical films.

*The Young Mr Pitt* marks a step forward and in the right direction. First of all it takes a dull figure in that little known period of English political history which lies between the French Revolution and Trafalgar. And if the subject was chosen with an eye on useful box office and patriotic angles, it is not necessarily the worse for that. For Mr Pitt was obviously a dull man. He does not shine in history's pages with the glitter of adulteries or grand passions, nor were his triumphs of the sword and the dagger. He was just an earnest politician with a message and an idea. He believed that Britain was a great

country but that it had got to pull its socks up if it wanted to stay great.

It was, in spite of its easy and obvious appeal to the public to-day, not a bad choice for a subject. In fact it might even be called a brave choice, and it has been bravely treated. The film succeeds in being continuously interesting without any of the tricks which are usually considered necessary. If somebody had taken just a little more trouble with the script this might even have been a great film.

The film shows Pitt confronted by the menace of a Napoleonic invasion from across the Channel and by the cat-calls of the appeasers on the Opposition Bench led by Charles James Fox. This is the theme of the film. Pitt, watching Napoleon's movements and realising the danger; Fox, playing up to the people's wish for peace and always advocating a policy of appeasement. It makes a good story and the audience obviously liked it, perhaps because it gave them something to think about and because the producers had not considered it necessary to bring in the usual rag-tag and bobtail of comic servants and court mistresses.

The film ultimately fails to reach the top grade because after they have finished with the characters of Pitt, George the Third and Charles James Fox the script writers just have not bothered any more. Perhaps all the in-between bits are on the cutting-room floor. But it is difficult to believe that with Sheridan, Wilberforce, Talleyrand, Nelson, Gibbon of the Decline and Fall, and Napoleon to use, there could not have been

a little more life among the supporting characters. They cannot all have been as dull and as dumb as the film suggests. And if they were not chronologically at hand to fill the gaps, there was an often repeated shot of the corridor of Number Ten Downing Street, a coach rolling up the drive of a country mansion or a crowd of people jumping up and down in the streets, all of which became monotonous and suggested that someone had slept.

Donat does a good solid job as Pitt. He has got the drive and the sincerity and as usual made the whole thing seem credible. Robert Morley attacks the part of Fox with great gusto and it is none the worse for having a coat torn in it. Raymond Lovell is excellent as George the Third, agricultural interests, seabathing and all. The rest of the cast all suggest that they could be good if somebody would only give them a chance to do something. Napoleon comes off worst. All his appearances are treated with the greatest respect and the maximum amount of careful art direction. He tucks his hand in his coat, glares at the floor and takes up all the traditional poses on very splendid sets. But he never remotely suggests anything other than Madame Tussaud's. A grave fault, because it sets Pitt and England against a waxwork. Cecil Beaton's costumes and sets are exceptionally good throughout the film. The music, usually of the greatest help in the more awkward moments of historical films, was undistinguished, it neither helped nor hindered and added nothing to the story.

The film is good entertainment, but is it good history? I don't know and I don't suppose the audience did, either. *That Young Mr Pitt* may have been several kinds of bad man. But Mr. Donat and Mr. Carol Reed, carefully directing, have used him for a good solid film.

*It's been going on for years . . .*

EACH week renews the interest which readers feel in their copy of the "Kinematograph Weekly".

This interest is nothing new. It's been going on for years, and the reasons are to be found quite easily in the way in which the "Kinematograph Weekly" gets down to "brass tacks", and presents them in a newsy way which never becomes "spiky".

This week, next week, for as long as there is a "Kinematograph Weekly", its extensive field-work will ensure a complete recording of current and future happenings in the artistic and technical progress of Kinematography.

**Kine**matograph  
**WEEKLY**

93 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C.2

**SIGHT  
and  
SOUND**

**The  
Autumn Issue  
is now  
OUT**

**6d.**

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,  
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1

## CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR,  
Sir,

It was a great shock to hear the sad news of the death of Walter Leigh who was killed in action in the Middle East last month.

English music, and English film music, has suffered a loss it can ill afford, and I should like to pay a personal tribute to the memory of a most distinguished and versatile composer.

Almost the first documentary film I saw was *Song of Ceylon*, and his music for this, with its immaculate technique and instinctive beauty, made a lasting impression on me.

Not only was Walter Leigh a composer of delightful and original "light" music—his music for *The Jolly Roger* and the Farjeon revues will probably be best remembered by the general public—but he was a serious composer of distinction and recognised and admired as such by his contemporaries.

It is fitting that we who are working in documentary films for a cause which demanded his life should remember him and his work with gratitude.

I am, believe me,  
Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM ALWYN

### Film School (Cont. from page 103)

again be absent from any serious concept of mass education.

Our own college is this mass educational world in microcosm. It has become a war training centre for the duration. Yet many of the innovations that spring from the needs of the emergency will carry over into peace and affect the nature of peacetime educational thought. This fact is already unmistakable as we see a startling revision of academic attitudes toward efficiency in teaching methods, relations to the community, practical values as against cultural prestige. It is no accident that the I.F.T. is so popular in the college to-day. Documentary is the form the educational revolution must take.

The Institute of Film Techniques was established to find relief for just such problems as American wartime educators and public information officials are facing today. Our job was to co-ordinate thought and its communication, in films at least. We planned to train film makers who would know what the educators are trying to do and to train educators who would know how films are made. We realised that it was necessary for both groups to talk to each other in a common language.

We began too late to stave off the current famine in film personnel, but that is only a reason to go ahead at increased speed.

The youngsters we are training in war film techniques to-day will play their part in shaping the new patterns of peacetime film. They have the advantages of growing up in the discipline and urgency that goes with making films that must win campaigns. With cruised sensibilities but with inner strength, sweaty but fearless, they will become the educators and propagandists, the film directors and producers of a changing world.

No. 4

RFU

## THE PHEASANT AND HIS MATE

A pheasant had made his nest in a cornfield late in the year, and at reaping-time his Mate was still sitting in comfort on her eggs.

Early in the morning the workmen came to the field, took off their coats, whetted their scythes, and started one after another to reap the wheat and stack it in stooks. The pheasant flew up to see what they were doing, and when he saw a workman swing his scythe and cut a rat in two, he rejoiced and flew back to his mate, and said: "Have no fear of the workmen, they have come to cut the rats to pieces for us".

But his mate said, "The workmen are here to cut the wheat, and with the wheat they are cutting everything in their way, the rats, the pheasants' nests, and the pheasants' heads. My heart forebodes no good; but I cannot carry away the eggs, nor bear to leave them in the nest".

When the reapers came to the pheasant's nest, one of the workmen swung his scythe and cut off the head of the pheasant and of the pheasant's mate, and put the eggs in his bosom, and gave them to his children to play with.

As for the pheasant and his mate, they made a tasty dish and their tail feathers a decoration for his wife's hat.

From which you can draw your own conclusions.

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W.1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958



## PROPAGANDA PRINCIPLES

*Excerpts from an article on Bolshevik propaganda by Yaroslavsky. (Pravda, July 10th, 1942.)*

FROM the very first days the Bolshevik Party was formed Lenin and Stalin emphasised the importance of propaganda. It was when the Bolshevik Party had switched over from a narrow framework of illegal Party groups to mass propaganda that its influence over the masses had begun to grow in the Czarist days. Lenin and Stalin had taught the Bolshevik propagandists the burning passion of the Bolshevik truth. Every town, every factory, every large local Party organisation had its speakers to whose words the masses listened.

Many a time the words of Bolshevik propagandists dispelled the last shreds of doubt, when the necessity of a demonstration or a strike was being discussed. Many a time backward or wavering people were swept off their feet, made to follow the small Bolshevik vanguard.

Lenin said . . . "Lucidity of propaganda is a basic condition. If our opponents admit that we have done miracles in the development of propaganda it is not because we had many propagandists and a large quantity of paper. It must be understood that the truth that was contained in the propaganda has penetrated the heads of the people, and it is impossible to get away from this truth".

When the threat of a new intervention by the German imperialism appeared over our country in the shape of the Hitler Armies, Comrade Stalin spoke to all the toilers of the U.S.S.R. on 3rd July, 1941. With the greatest precision he put to the many millions of Soviet people the urgency of understanding the whole weight of the danger. For it is a question of life and death for

the Soviet State, a question of life and death for the peoples of the U.S.S.R., an issue between freedom and slavery.

In our Bolshevik propaganda the grim truth combines with burning passion, with conviction in the justice of our cause. This passion evokes hatred for the enemy, courage and daring. It makes the people fearless, makes them strain all their energy in order to conquer.

Lenin and Stalin always appeal to the best instincts in the people, to their best qualities, to courage, dauntlessness, loyalty to the common cause, to their love of their Socialist Fatherland. They appeal to their great fighting traditions. They often turn to history.

The strength of the Bolshevik propaganda lies in its aggressiveness. The enemy must be incessantly unmasked, his plans, his cunning, his catches, all his meanness must be revealed. He must be beaten not only by shells, bullets and grenades, but also by the words of our propaganda which will drive out all the remnants of complacency and indifference and make the blows on the enemy harder. Some impressive literary image, a piercing or pointed poem, deadly irony, satire—all this must be used by the Bolshevik propagandist as his arms.

We need not only professional propagandists. The best workers in factories, etc., must act as such. Where conditions permit workmen, collective farmers, employees, members of the Soviet intelligentsia, Red Army men, Red Navy men must hear the upright, burning, hard-hitting words of the Soviet propagandists. It is necessary to educate propagandists to raise them from below, help them to grow politically, to accumulate knowledge, work on the culture and purity of their language. The wireless can play an enormous part in this. It is necessary that the entire country should hear by wireless the best orators of our Party.

## HOLLYWOOD IN ARMS

The following opinions by U.S. directors or Hollywood war policy are reprinted from the *National Board of Review Magazine*:

### PRESTON STURGES

I DON'T think there should be the slightest difference in the type of pictures made. The contemporary picture naturally deals with its time, which means contemporary pictures made now will have heroes, either trying to get into uniform or in being invalided out of uniform. This merely because heroes must be heroic. I'm certain, however, that a picture laid in 1906 would be just as interesting, and the same goes for a picture laid in the year 1690, or in the year 2,000, showing a beautiful love story in a world that has returned to agriculture. I haven't had much time to think this out, but that is what I believe.

### ERNST LUBITSCH

IN this present crisis the leaders of the motion picture industry had to take into consideration not only what the public wants to see, but also what an audience should see. This is no time for the makers of motion pictures to trail behind its public. Never before was leadership more necessary than right now. Our only aim can be—winning the war, and our motion picture policy must be dictated accordingly. That of course doesn't mean that every picture showing in the theatres from now on should reek with battle scenes and marching soldiers. We must have a sufficient number of escapist pictures; pictures which for a short while will relieve the defence worker and the soldier on vacation from the present-day grim realities. Nostalgic stories that remind us that this world of ours has been pretty good and that it is something worthwhile fighting for. But without something, a part—and not only a small one—of the motion picture programme must be devoted to dealing with current situations. The enemy as pictured on the screen must not be under-rated, but also not over-estimated. We must make clear to our audiences what we are fighting for, that the future of our and our children's lives depends upon our ultimate victory. We must familiarise them with the great hardship that lies ahead of us if we want to bring this war to a successful conclusion.

### ARCHIE MAYO

WE'RE at war. The business of fighting is one thing; and the business of sustaining the fighters is another thing.

It's true that equipment, foods and medical supplies are most essential in the subsistence of our fighting forces, but there is another element called morale, which on the surface might seem insignificant, but in reality is all-important. It means point of view; it means faith; it means the reason why "Yankee Doodle Dandy" clicks.

In my humble opinion, I believe motion pictures can best serve our fighting men and our civilians by building up morale to the tune of comedies, which, for a moment, give us contrast to this grim crisis that is upon us.

If this were a war in which the issue were confused to the point that we did not know what we were fighting for, or why, I would feel that pictures should then be made that would tell our objectives. But we do know what we are fighting for; we do know the seriousness of the issues at stake; we do know the difference between right and wrong—so, in our spare moments—why not laugh?

Park Studio  
Putney Park Lane  
S.W.15.

Managing Director :

ANDREW BUCHANAN

TEL. Putney 6274



FILMS OF GREAT BRITAIN LIMITED

## SHORTS BOOKINGS JULY-AUGUST

The following shorts bookings are selected from a list covering its members supplied by the News & Specialised Theatres Association.)

	Week commencing
Architects of England	July 19th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	
Ristorators of Kennels	2nd August
Eros, W.I.	9th
Victoria Street News Theatre, S.W.1.	
all of Canada	July 27th
The News Theatre, Leeds	
Comic Sketches	9th August
Classic, S.W.17	
Wild Psychology	July 19th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	
Colour in Clay	August 2nd
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	
Cookie Carnival	July 26th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	
Technological March On	August 2nd
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	
Artmouth	July 19th
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	
on Winslow of the Navy	July 19th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	26th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	August 2nd
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	9th
Early News Reels	July 19th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	
Yes on Brazil	19th
World's News Theatre, W.2	
athers	August 2nd
Classic, South Croydon	
ishing Blades	July 26th
Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	
urdens of England	26th
World's News Theatre, W.2	26th
Eros Theatre, W.I.	August 2nd
Victoria Street News Theatre, S.W.1	2nd
Waterloo Station, News Theatre, S.E.1	9th
Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	
formation Please No. 5	July 26th
Classic, South Croydon	
the Zoo No. 2	August 2nd
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	3rd
The News Theatre, Nottingham	9th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	July 19th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	
Is a Hap - Hap - Happy Day	August 2nd
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	
B. Praxley's Broadcast	July 26th
The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	26th
Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	August 9th
Classic, Portsmouth	
arch of Time No. 1-8th year. India Crisis	9th
News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	July 26th
Victoria Street News Theatre, S.W.1	26th
Eros Theatre, W.I.	26th
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	26th
World's News Theatre, W.2	August 9th
Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	9th
oscow Moods	July 26th
Victoria Street News Theatre, S.W.1	
oscow Parades	August 2nd
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	
viert Songs and Dances	August 10th
The News Theatre, Leeds	
reading the News	2nd
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	
ie Sign of Victory	July 19th
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	

### FEATURE REVIVALS

	Week commencing
Chelator Mother	July 26th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	
urage	19th
Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	
ingorous Moonlight	20th
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	
rk Victory	August 9th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	
or Feathers	July 26th
Classic, Southampton	August 2nd
Jassic, S.W.17	9th
Classic, Portsmouth	
ace	2nd
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	
Mice and Men	July 27th
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	
th Parallel	27th
Tatler Theatre, Chester	
in of Pennsylvania	August 3rd
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	
Ends Our Night	3rd
Tatler Theatre, Chester	
Ghost Breakers	July 19th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	
Sea Hawk	20th
Tatler Theatre, Chester	
el of Bagdad	August 10th
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	
thering Heights	July 26th
Jassic, S.W.17	August 2nd
Classic, South Croydon	

## ANNOUNCEMENT.

**THE STRAND FILM  
COMPANY HAVE BEEN  
APPOINTED OFFICIAL  
FILM ADVISORS TO  
THE NORWEGIAN  
GOVERNMENT.**

*"ALL FOR NORWAY," The first  
Production to be made by STRAND  
for the Norwegian Government is  
now being produced. Several other  
films are in course of production.*

## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

New address:—

Offices: 1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

Tel.: GERRARD 6304/5.

Studios: BRITISH NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

Tel.: ELSTREE 1644.

# FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made.  
F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Australian Trade Publicity Film Library**. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3, sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 3 Hanover Street, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1941. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses for 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**British Instructional Films**, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; *Pathé Gazettes* and *Pathetones*; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Canadian Pacific Film Library**. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity**. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

**Central Council for Health Education**. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

**Central Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Dominion of New Zealand Film Library**. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

**Educational Films Bureau**, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Education General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 34 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Soldiers with Wings*, *Britain's R.A.F.*, *Dutch East Indies*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt and R. A. Fairthorne, Kirk Michael, Hillfield Road, Farnborough, Hants. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester. 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, Church Walk, Dunsdale, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South Africa Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Heaton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts. 9.5 mm. catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association, Ltd.**, Transpor House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Film of democratic and co-operative interest. Note and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

AUGUST, 1942

## CONTENTS

MAKE UP YOUR MIND, MR. DALTON	109
NOTES OF THE MONTH	110
SECOND FRONT FOR PROPAGANDA	111
FILM OF THE MONTH	112
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	113
SCIENTIFIC FILMS	115
FIVE-MINUTE FILMS	116
NEWSREELS AND RADIO	117
FILM SOCIETIES	118
WASHINGTON'S PLANS FOR FILMS	119
SHORTS BOOKINGS	120

VOL 3 NO 8

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## Make Up Your Mind, Mr. Dalton

THE President of the Board of Trade answering a question in the House, inferred that the Film Industry could look for no guarantee that its present inadequate studio space could be maintained, neither could there be any guarantee that there would be no further calls upon its already restricted man-power. This is a serious statement for a responsible Minister to make, for obviously no such statement would have been made without serious consideration. If further studio space and man-power are withdrawn it will hasten the disintegration of the British film production industry. The President made some pious remarks on the subject of Government and Service film units and he paternally patted them on the head stating that their interests would be protected. Does this statement of Mr. Dalton's mean that an industry which successive Presidents of the Board of Trade have been at such pains to build up, is going to be allowed to die without serious consideration of the factors involved?

It is some fifteen years since the Quota Act was placed on the statute book to ensure the maintenance of a living British Film Industry. The new Quota Act of 1938 has only been in operation for four years, more than two of them while the country has been at war. All that was said when the Act was drawn up remains true and even more true for a country that is fighting to keep its own culture and way of life alive. What stirring speeches were made and what clamorous articles were written, what battles were fought with reluctant American film interests to ensure that Britain should not only express herself to her own people by film but that her culture and way of life should be shown to the world! Can it be that when we need full sympathy and understanding among the Allied nations, one medium of our expression should be sacrificed to stack a few more tons of sugar in a film studio or recruit a few hundred men for the armed forces? Even now the rate of British feature film production has dropped from two hundred in pre-war years to around forty in the last year.

### Cinema's Vital Part

It is strange too that the film industry should be faced with these possibilities when so many successive members of the War Government have paid tribute to the cinema's vital part in maintaining morale and in propaganda.

It has been recognised in America that their film industry is a vital part of the war effort. Can it be that in the different attitudes of America and Britain towards film lies the answer to the continued neglect and possible further restrictions of the British industry? In America the cinema is a part of everybody's life from the Executive downwards. Going to the movies to them is as integral a part of their lives as having food. Whereas here, certainly the governing

classes (and this includes Labour, Liberal and Conservative politicians and civil servants) regard the films as something vaguely not quite nice—the "flicks". That this is so has been continually proved by the governing classes' lack of interest in the potentialities of the film.

There is no doubt that a good deal of the mistrust and dislike of the film industry in responsible circles arises from the fact that the cinema industry is exceedingly immature. Morally and financially its methods are still those of the nineteenth century. In America after some forty years, the industry has become reasonably mature and respected. For the reason that our industry here is still in such an immature state of development, its leaders are frequently the Barnums from the early days, or financial gamblers.

### Forty Films a Year

This highly individualistic, anarchic industry too, does not lend itself to organised representation, in fact it is only likely to come together when its financial interests are threatened. This has been the cinema industry's greatest failing for many years. Still to-day, when the film production industry is severely threatened it has become apparent that no joint organised representations are to be made to the Board of Trade, but each individual trade association has seen or will see the Board of Trade to represent their own interests—or the national interest as they frequently put it.

The situation then is roughly as follows. With its depleted studio staffs and with studio space at a premium, the feature film production industry can with luck produce forty films a year if it loses no further studio space and no more personnel. The American feature films imported into this country will be roughly four hundred, so British screens will carry far less than ten per cent of British films. It should be pointed out here that the Quota Act obliges all cinema owners to show fifteen per cent British films. Although they manifestly cannot carry this out, and none of them were very keen about it at any time, the Board of Trade has no plan and by not supporting the film industry, is denying its own Act.

In addition it appears that Government and Service film units are to be fully protected and given every facility. It is to be wondered whether past instances of film technicians being de-reserved, then called into the army and thence transferred to a Service film unit, are to be repeated, only in a more wholesale manner. Is studio space and equipment to be diverted to those units on the same basis? It would be interesting to have a report on what effective work the technicians in these Government and Service units are doing and whether their ever-increasing requisitioned equipment is being put to proper use. In factory terms—has anyone examined the comparative quantity and quality of their output. Again, the President



of the Board of Trade made no mention of that very important section of the film production industry—the commercial makers of Government films. Are they likely to retain their already overburdened and over-worked staffs? Are they likely to retain their insufficient equipment and inadequate studio space? They are the people who made the short propaganda film possible in this country. It appears, however, that they are no concern of the Board of Trade, though many of them are linked with the feature film industry and all of them are dependent on an active feature film industry being in existence—personnel, studios, laboratories, etc.

What everybody is looking for, from the Board of Trade officials to the lowliest technician, is a plan. In default of a plan we may well see a competition between four interests to gain control: the first interest is monopoly American capital, which would like to see independent production in this country come under its control. That the Americans succeeded in doing this in the last war when British films were in a much stronger position, is to them a happy augury of things to come. By the elimination of independent British production they would succeed in controlling all production and so be able to dictate their own terms for the rental of films to the second competitor—British monopoly capital. This competitor, in the body of the circuit interests, has control of the majority of the best

cinemas of this country. It hopes by controlling more and more cinemas to dictate the terms which will pay for American films. It is, therefore, in their interests to maintain as much British production as possible in case the American interests should withhold their films or sell against them in order to obtain better terms.

The third competitor is probably a weak entry, but it is conceivable that the Board of Trade, being unable to reconcile the warring interests, may propound a mild version of state capitalism similar to the National Coal Board. These proposals will probably throw British and American monopoly capital into one another's arms and the bureaucratic proposals would then undoubtedly be defeated. The fourth competitor is monopoly British Labour. One branch of the vested interests of Labour in the film trade has already put forward a plan for the complete nationalisation of the film production industry. This competitor is not likely to be a strong entry at the moment, as all the Trades Unions representing cinema workers are not yet united. The plans for nationalisation are not likely to make much headway until the capitalist power grows much weaker. The most this interest can hope for is that it might bring about the objectives of competitor No. 3.

These are the four warring interests jostling for position, and still the film production industry grows smaller and its facilities less.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

So So

JOE SEIDELMAN is in London. You may not have heard of him—but he has heard of you. The following paragraphs from *Today's Cinema* will explain why: "The enthusiastic tribute he (Joe) paid to C. M. Woolf and the G.F.D. set-up was no lip service. Universal know how much they owe to C.M. and are grateful for it. 'Britain', said Joe, represented 50 per cent of the income to Universal".

"WELL (*Cinema's* caps) it must be the first time in history of films that a British company has achieved that relative importance to the American market. Great work! 'C.M. is doing a marvellous job', said Seidelman.—Just quietly and gratefully!"

Mr. Seidelman should be quiet and grateful but what reason the British film industry or its trade papers have got for congratulating either Joe or C.M. it is difficult to see. We know we lost our film industry in the last war and that we stand a good chance of doing it again. But why cheer about it. Incidentally, Mr. C. M. Woolf is also chairman of the British Film Producers' Association. Nice work if you can get it!

A very different reception to that given our "Joe" was *Today's Cinema's* of the British Ministry of Information's roneo "*Suggestions for Feature Producers*". It was just a roneo pamphlet with not unreasonable suggestions for feature producers to follow if they wanted any co-operation from the M.O.I. It said that the Ministry would "support all types of pictures including purely dramatic or comedy kind provided these were of the highest quality and neither maudlin, morbid, nor purely nostalgic for the old ways and days". It went on to say that "its special support would be given to realistic films dealing with events not directly about the war, but featuring events in factories, factory hostels, workshops, mines and on the land, and to other serious films dealing with historical and dramatic themes, provided they showed the positive value of British national characteristics and the democratic way of life".

Surely this wasn't so unreasonable. It was practically the first official statement on what was considered good film propaganda and it was not a bad statement. But no! The *Cinema* which can say "good work" to an Englishman and an American who are shifting the boodle out to support the American industry, can only say of their own miserable M.O.I. "And now let us turn to the lighter side of life. High up among the headlines dealing with the lighter side of life I should put this latest pronouncement from the Ministry of Information.

"It is the funniest thing that has happened for years. Just savour this sentence quoting the Ministry's views, for the British Film Producers." The *Cinema* then quotes the paragraph we have quoted above, and ends up by saying, "It is high time this government department recognised that entertainment is an art. Matters of art are best left to artists who have studied them".

The only bright spot in the grimy story was the *Cinema's* issue two days later. The M.O.I. had apparently opened one eye and looked at them, and there were seven humble paragraphs of apology. **Rumour**

PRACTICALLY everyone in the country has heard the story by now of the American soldier going into a pub and saying to the barmaid, "Give me a glass of bitter—and give it to me quicker than you ran at Dunkirk." Practically everyone will have heard which pub it happened in, who was there at the time and so on. If you think back a year or so you may remember another rumour. Haw-haw said that the clock in such and such a barrack room was three and a half minutes fast, and that he knew all about it. Two days later when the clock had been put right Haw-haw had said, "We notice your clock was put right this morning". At the time an investigation proved that nothing even vaguely similar had been said over the German wireless. It was all just a rumour. It had whipped round the country at incredible speed and had been told of nearly every public clock in the country. The story of the American soldier is just the same. To one pub in London five distinct versions of this story came in one week, one from Bristol, one from Cambridge, one from Nottingham, one from Glasgow, and one from Piccadilly. Each one about a different named pub.

Rumour used like this seems to be one of the cheapest and quickest forms of propaganda there is. There are stories of German agents dressing as Americans, and going into pubs, but it doesn't seem really necessary. All they have got to do is to tell the story to someone. We do the rest. Considering the importance of good feelings between British and Americans, it might be a good idea to make first some film about the real Americans and what they are like. And secondly, a good rumour film. Not dreary melodrama, but a good straightforward analysis of rumours, using the ones that nearly all people will remember and tracing them back to their invisible sources. Not trying to shock or browbeat the audience, but just simple explanation.

(Continued on page 114)

# SECOND FRONT FOR PROPAGANDA

**T**HE M.O.I. Films Division has changed its production and distribution policy for propaganda films. The Five Minute film is to be abolished and a monthly film lasting 15 minutes is to be substituted, with free distribution to all cinemas. In addition there are to be twelve two-reelers a year, sold in the open market, and a certain number of "specials"—possibly up to feature length—also for straight commercial showing.

The pros and cons of this change are discussed elsewhere. But a further question remains. Is there going to be a change of heart as well as a change of machinery?

It is easy for Ministry officials and film makers alike to be too satisfied with a mere flow of so-called propaganda films and with the knowledge that they are being widely shown. Everyone is working hard, and under difficult conditions. Everyone tends to look at the trees and to fail to see the wood.

Once again it is time rigorously to question the value of our propaganda services. In our last issue we referred to the lamentable debate on propaganda in the House of Commons; and to-day the impression of failure and stultification is becoming more and more intensified. Britain has built up a huge propaganda machine and is failing to use it to good effect.

Look at the situation objectively. The war has reached its greatest crisis. Whatever the day to day victories or reverses may be, the basic situation is one of imminent peril and extreme difficulty. Shipping and supplies, quality and quantity of armaments, man-power and woman-power, military tactics and strategy—in all these spheres we find danger and dissatisfaction.

## Basic Morale

Victories and defeats are reflected by day-to-day morale. But what of basic morale—the morale which can increase or stifle the all-out effort of the nation? And what of the need to bind together the efforts of the people of the United Nations, to increase their understanding of each other's problems? What is being done about it?

Propaganda is not just a method of making friends and influencing people. Propaganda, as the Jesuits well knew, is concerned with faith, and if it has no faith it is a waste of effort.

In Britain our propaganda began by working from the belief that we were winning. After Dunkirk it switched to the belief that we should win provided we tried. To-day it is doing little more than run around in small circles trying to equate platitudes with certain inescapable facts which involve clear thinking, unconventional action, and a burning faith.

Make no mistake about it. No propagandist can ply his trade if this freedom of faith is denied to him. And where is that freedom to-day?

Poppycock, say the cynics (i.e. people afraid to face up to issues). we are fighting a war between good and evil and that's faith enough for the common folk. The good United Nations against the evil Axis—that's enough to impel an all-out effort.

Basically it might be, if fighting against was all that's needed. But what about fighting for? People all over the world have been led up the garden path of war too often now to have a real belief that the end of a conflict means millenium. They look to a post-war world representing their own simple specifications, even if they don't attach 'high falutin' ideological phrases to them. They look at Russia, and observe a faith which removes mountains, and when they think about Russia, it occurs to them that this faith is not that blind patriotism from which the old-guard so glibly rationalise their admiration of Soviet effort, but rather the fact that the people of Russia are fighting for a world which is theirs and which they themselves have built.

It's not much of an exaggeration to say that the only people in Britain fighting in similar terms are a comparatively small group whose world, if the war is to be won, must vanish unregretted. Conversely, the people of Britain and America and China have to fight for a world which they have *not* yet built, and they seek, at least, confirmation that there will be a chance to build it.

It is by now well known that the reason why the M.O.I. has had, at best, a limited success is simply that the Government has no desire for the active propaganda which is the only solution to this and other paradoxical problems.

Propaganda without confirmative action is negative and must end in collapse. Goebbels is beginning to find this out. Sooner or later—to-day almost certainly sooner—the pronouncements of the propagandists must be proved by action and result to be true. Truth in propaganda means nothing more nor less—a fact which the House of Commons speakers egregiously forget. But to-day most of our propaganda is hot air.

## Backed by Action

To take a possible example. Films and radio can plug the idea of total effort and equality of sacrifice till they are black in the face. They can take concrete examples—rationing in various fields, communal restaurants and what not. But what earthly use is it unless it is backed up by action? The removal of the basic petrol ration is a fact. The institution of compulsory communal restaurants for all alike would be another fact. Two facts, two bricks to shore up the hitherto shaky foundations of our propaganda system.

We sympathise with the officials at the M.O.I. and the B.B.C. They have no direct instructions on policy, nor have they permission to institute a policy of their own. They are fighting in a fog.

But if they believe in this world revolution which is so bloodily being fought on a scale never before imagined, they've got to get out of the fog. They've got to smash the petty-mindedness, the timorousness, and the reactionary stupidities which stand in their way as much as in the way of everyone else. They must even risk losing their jobs—a thing which revolutionaries have sometimes been known to do.

They must insist on a policy which is positive and categorical, a policy which says in detail what hitherto has been oh so carefully expressed in cloudy phrases and political catchwords. And they must insist, above all, on complete freedom to interpret this policy once it has been laid down.

All this may sound like an unnecessary repetition of the A.B.C. Do not forget that in Britain to-day the A.B.C. of propaganda, of total effort, of true democracy, still remains painfully to be learnt. Nor will it be learnt from our present teachers, but from men and women with a belief and bravery far beyond the tired old ushers who even yet are getting their palsied thumbs stuck in the machinery.

## WHAT CAN FILMS DO?

**I**T can easily be seen that the success of the new M.O.I. films policy will depend not merely on first-class technique, important enough though this will be, but also, and especially, on their choice of subject matter and the way they treat it.

First and foremost these films must be identified with the will of the people.

Secondly they must be tough and uncompromising.

Thirdly they must be international rather than parochial; informal rather than hortatory.

These three needs are based on the fact that a full realisation of our peril in active rather than fearful terms is still lacking, and that total effort has not yet, but must immediately be achieved.

The coming winter will be one of hardship for the civilian population. It's not enough to ask them to grin and bear it. You have to explain why, and do so in such forthright terms that your film is also impelling greater activity, even under conditions of very real discomfort. But even here the best possible film will be at a loss if the facts of the case do not bear it out. If there is less food, less coal and less transport it will be essential for the public to see for itself that, for instance, higher income levels do not, as at present, have an unfair advantage over lower income levels. Your film must be based on fact, and this is a problem which the M.O.I. must most seriously face, since it represents one of the greatest difficulties if active films are to be made.

Similarly the M.O.I. will no doubt (and quite correctly) wish to relate the present need for total effort to the constructive future for which the peoples of the world are fighting. This again cannot convincingly be done save in definite relation to the present.

And remember that people need a lot of convincing on these points when they read speeches in the House saying that we should not try to stir up revolutionary activity in occupied Europe, or when they see notices on bombed areas in which private building interests call for offers for new clients, or when they hear of a commission being set up to consider the future of public schools instead of the future possibilities of the boarding school system as a whole.

In these columns we have stressed over and over again the necessity for the Cabinet to commit itself to a definite policy of propaganda, which of course involves the question of total effort (which in turn postulates total equality). That policy must be boldly stated; and it must be a policy which will stand up to the practical appraisal of the ordinary citizen—not the 1922 Committee or the foggies of Transport House.

Without such a policy it would be wise for the M.O.I. to confine most of its work to the instructional films at which it excels.

We do not propose to attack the Films Division for past sins of omission or commission. Its officers, equally with film-makers and radio-producers, have been working for three long years under impossible conditions.

But we suggest that more fight must be shown, so that the existing machinery can be geared to a definite instead of an indefinite purpose.

The time has come for the M.O.I. people to have the guts to present an either-or to their Minister, and through him to the Government. Either establish a policy, or admit you are not interested in revolutionary propaganda, which is the only propaganda which can express and give a lead to the ideas and wishes of the people.

Otherwise, the new production plans will represent a change of method only. They should essentially represent a change of heart.

## FILM OF THE MONTH

### Mrs. Miniver

*Delight of the upper middle classes, delight of that 4 per cent of the population whose incomes rank higher than £2,000 per annum, was the occasional column in "The Times" headed "Mrs. Miniver". Its cosy charm, elegantly transmitted, in a less bitter style than Miss E. M. Delafield, had an irresistible appeal for that class that looked back with such infinite regret to the spacious Edwardian days. While the life it purported to portray had a winsome, near-aristocratic flavour, its heyday was during 'appeasement', and while the writer was so obviously a part of that life, its constant danger was its tendency to be not so much a participant's story but a rather flushed outsider's appreciation of a stratum of society. Our correspondent's review suggests that this effect was realised in Mrs. Miniver's translation to the harsher lights of the screen.*

Mrs. Miniver is not one of the easiest films to review because in some ways it is very good and in a lot of others it is just repulsive. You can sit in the Empire and hear practically the whole house weeping—a British audience with three years of war behind it, crying at one of the phoniest war films that has ever been made. So you can tell it is well made—superlatively well made. It is hard to be unkind to Mrs. Miniver because William Wyler is such a good director, but the film is so untrue that it has got to be done.

On Mrs. Miniver, her husband and three children William Wyler has lavished all the qualities that make people likeable. The Minivers are a comfortably-off professional family. They have a big house with a river frontage—landing stage and motor-boat; a £400 Lagonda and a son at Oxford. They live in a world which seems to consist of giggling housemaids with their bucolic young men; doddering, servile station-masters; glee singers in their feather boas; duchesses and their granddaughters, black-mailling, comic grocers and truculent ever-leaving cooks.

#### Gross Misinterpretation

The film has already been described by a leading British critic as "the best film on English war-time life". The film was, I suppose, well-intentioned in its praise of the people of Britain and their ability to 'take it'. But though I fear many of the less worthy will accept the film as congratulation many more will be disgusted by its gross misinterpretation of character and types.

These pseudo-emic characters are no strangers to the British stage or indeed to the British film. And if the film had made a

less strenuous attempt to be realistic one could have accepted them for their entertainment value. But the film sets out to tell the true story of blitzed England and comes too close to a historical record to treat it thus lightly. We, therefore, take grave exception to the view that the Minivers were and are the backbone of Britain. The subject of the film is important and the excellence of the film is important, so the impact on audiences of this Hollywood idea of Britain's behaviour in war-time is of some moment. The Miniver, or people like them, were there under the bombing (though the little Minivers were assuredly tucked away in a safe area and quite rightly too) but the Minivers were in the minority. The cooks and housemaids, grocers and stationmasters, bargees and tugmen were certainly there in the middle of it and overwhelmingly in the majority.

#### Why does Wyler fail?

In *The Little Foxes* Wyler made the negroes into dignified sensible people. They were the people who grew the cotton, spun the cloth, grew the food, looked after the white people's children, sang songs and lived true and well, while around them their masters bickered over pennies and mistresses; killed masters for a few musty deeds in a tin box. Why, when he comes to an all-white story does Wyler fail? Surely he cannot believe that the four hundred thousand men Mr. Miniver goes to rescue from the beaches are the morons that he shows in the rest of the film. I can well believe that the story and conception of the people are Jan Struther's but surely Mr. Wyler who, with all his skill can turn a family of drones into good human people can surely clean up a script or else in the actual direction make the forty-seven odd million people in Britain just a little more realistic.

It is an awkward case to argue. One attitude of mind presents the working classes as a grand, flawless people and the middle class as mean, vicious and effete. The other presents the working classes as stupid dolts and the middle classes as nice kind benefactors of mankind. Must we blame Wyler because he was misinformed?

It is a pity that so much ability has been misused by an allied country in presenting Britain so badly. It might be a good idea if the Ministry of Information had someone in Hollywood to act as adviser on films about Britain and also to keep a check on our nationals who go overseas and write stories of the Miniver type.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 8

AUGUST 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Center, New York.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

Owned and published by

FILM CENTRE LTD.

34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1

GERRARD 4253

## New Documentary Films

**Front Line Camera.** Production: Army Film Unit.

This is a film with appeal to the general public. It is lucky enough to have the right subject—the war as it is being fought in England; the right commentator—Ed. Murrow, and it may also have had unique facilities in its shooting, since the Army Film Unit is responsible. With these advantages it has a good start, but it is also well made.

The Front Line is the South Coast and we are shown a bit of the real lighting with German bombers that is going on, and a good deal of manoeuvres and preparations for the offensive. The film indicates that the Front Line is passing out of its state of defence and adopting the aggressive attitude. The commentary carries the aggressive and cheerful note throughout and whatever may have been omitted in the showing or the telling, the film has a tonic effect and will do much to improve morale.

**Essential Jobs.** Production: Paul Rotha. Director: John Pige. Story: V. S. Pritchett. Camera: Stanley Rodwell. Recording: Leo Wilkins. Editing: Sylvia Cummings.

The purpose of this film appears to be the consolation of those who work in seemingly unessential jobs. In the style of "The Old Woman and Her Pig" fairy-tale, it begins with a man who has the humble job of making small wire nails. His workmate jeers at him. But it appears that these wire nails are going to be very important in the end. In the next stage the nails appear in the hands of two "browned off" factory girls who use them in the job of packing cocoa—admittedly an extremely tedious job. This cocoa is also highly important for it is to cheer and warm the lorry driver in an all-night café, a fact that may seem insignificant. But no, the lorry driver is carrying boxes of soap to a factory where leather is being dressed and the workers need it to ward off anthrax. Just as all the other workers are either grousing or being groused at, the leather worker is complaining bitterly because his wife has no respect for his job. The next link in the chain is a factory where girls are using the leather to make gloves which they complain are "fit for duchesses". They get together on this complaint and decide to stop work. This is the signal for the rounding off of the film. The man in charge of the shop addresses the girls, explaining the vital importance of the gloves, for they are to warm the hands of the girls on the aircraft defences. He takes the opportunity of moralising on the relative importance of war jobs and generally telling the girls off for their behaviour.

This film is competently made and has probably a value for the more simple-minded, but it tends to a schoolmasterly attitude and suffers a good deal from lack of humour.

**They Speak for Themselves.** Production: Seven League. Made by: H. M. Neiter, Paul Rotha, Miles Malfeson, Rex Warner. One-reeler, M.O.I. non-theatrical.

In this a number of young people air their views on war and the future of Britain. It is snappily cut, is never allowed to become tedious, and its technique offers a more or less fresh avenue for future films of discussion. The picture content is confined to the group of speakers, and the direc-

tion had been sufficiently good to overcome this limitation.

The young people's vocal offerings seem a little over-practised and they present nothing very new. However they do give one the impression of being a thinking, enquiring section of the community and full of a sense of responsibility for the future of their country.

**Twelve Days.** Production: M.O.I. for M.O.F. Story: Mary Benedetta. Camera: A. T. Dinsdale. Recording: Charles Tasto. Editor: Catherine Millar. Director: Cecil Musk.

This is an account of the distribution of meat under war conditions. A farmer finds that he has not sufficient feed for his sheep and decides to sell some of them. He discovers that he must give notice of his intention to the Ministry of Food twelve days in advance of market day. The film devotes itself to showing the organisation that goes on in these twelve days. It is an account of the meat rationing system and though not conspicuously entertaining, the story is well told, taking into consideration the highly complicated organisation that has to be clarified.

**They Keep the Wheels Turning.** G.B. Screen Services. Direction: Francis A. Searle. Camera: Walter Harvey. Recording: John Douglas. Editing: Enid Mansell.

A film about the labour shortage in the motor industry. The solution is the bringing of women to work in the machine shops. A competent, pedestrian job of work with no high lights.

**The United Nations.** Crown Film Unit.

The Crown Film Unit has done a good job on this from the points of view of finish, timing, music and colour. If you are susceptible to pageantry you may even cry with emotion. It should give the newsreel boys something to think about, or could they do it a lot better if they had the time, the money and the equipment?

**Air Force Newsreel Material**

During the past month, the Air Force through the M.O.I. presented the newsreel companies with thirteen hundred feet of film shot over France and Germany. The newsreels at first rejected it but were finally persuaded to use it. In the end all the reels came out with nothing else in them but the despised scoop.

The point at issue was not the quality of the material, for that was beyond reproach, but the fear in the minds of the newsreel companies that their job might in the end be done by service units. The Service attitude to the newsreel companies' coverage of material of this kind is that there are too many difficulties involved in letting civilian cameramen fly on operational flights. In fact, even now, the Air Force cameramen are ordinary working members of an air crew with a specified job apart from handling a camera.

This thirteen hundred feet of material is much superior to anything yet turned out by Germany.

Actually the newsreels have not presented it very well. They did not, for example, build up the crossing of the French coast and there was no explanation of the night bombing to tell audiences that the pin points of light were in fact large scale fires and not just bad black-out. At all events, hats off to the R.A.F. Film Unit. They have certainly presented a good argument for the Air Force shooting its own material.



## Notes of the Month

(Continued)

### Celluloid Front

HOLLYWOOD was willing and eager to help. In the long pre-war days the world's biggest cinema industry piddled around making training films for the armed forces, an occasional hammy patriotic picture of its own, tried its hand at box-office propaganda and got smeared by U.S. Senate isolationists for its pains. After Pearl Harbour, Hollywood pleaded with Franklin Roosevelt's Government Films Co-ordinator, white-haired, volcanically patient Lowell Mellett, for an important assignment.

Last week, four months later, Hollywood at last got its marching orders. They called for little more than a short hike. For Government account, the industry will make 26 shorts on war subjects provided by Mellett. Having set a man to do a boy's work, Mellett returned to Washington.

Just over the border the Canadian National Film Board, with no Hollywood to call on, is shooting more than 100 pictures a year. Its full-time executive head, voluble John Grierson, who prepared England's slick Government film set-up, was busy visualising the war for Canadian citizens.

For its own celluloid front, the U.S. still has no pattern except that which Mellett will provide when he gets around to it. Hollywood's and the Government's few war documentaries have been a hodge-podge of patriotic appeals, expositions on tank construction, sugar-coated shots of training troops, etc. These films have failed to keep the U.S. public informed on the progress of the war, to tell it why tyes have to be rationed, to relate the vast complexity of global war to the individual citizen's job, etc.

### Who's Baby?

The new production and distribution policy of the M.O.I. for propaganda in public cinemas has come into being without much criticism. Yet a very serious change has been brought about—the five-minute film has been dropped and a monthly fifteen minute film substituted. It appears from what statements have been made that this was almost wholly brought about at the wish of the exhibitors. They claimed that a weekly five-minute film was too difficult to fit into their programmes. They could not drop their advertising films, their slide advertisements for local traders, their organ interludes. However without a battle the M.O.I. lets them drop five to seven minutes of Government information. There is plenty of evidence that the public liked the five-minute film and the production quality was constantly improving. It would be interesting to know if, when the C.F.A. dictated the new form that government propaganda was to take, whether they made any guarantee that their members would show the monthly fifteen-minuter more loyally than they showed the five minuter. It would also be interesting to know whether anyone has worked out the number of times a member of the public is likely to see one of these longer films. Is the regular twice or three times-a-weeker liable to see the same film perhaps six times or more? Once again, that Jekyll and Hyde, the Films Division of the M.O.I., has thrown aside the bristling mane-like robe of a lion and disclosed a wee, wee mouse.

## No. 5

### THE GARDENER AND

### THE BABOON



THERE was once a Gardener, who loved gardening to that degree that he wholly absented himself from the company of men, to the end he might give himself up entirely to the care of his flowers and plants. He had neither wife nor children; and from morning till night he did nothing but work in his garden, so that it lay like a terrestrial paradise. At length, however, the good man grew weary of being alone, and took a resolution to leave his garden in search of good company.

As he was soon after, walking at the foot of a mountain, he spied a baboon, whose looks had in them nothing of a savage fierceness natural to that animal, but were mild and gentle. This baboon was also weary of being alone and came down from the mountain for no other reason but to see whether he could meet with anyone that would join society with him. So soon, therefore, as these two saw each other, they began to have a friendship one for another; and the Gardener first accosted the baboon, who, in return, made him a profound reverence. After some compliments had passed between them, the Gardener made the baboon a sign to follow him, and bringing him into his garden, regaled him with a world of very delicious fruit, which he had carefully preserved; so that at length they entered into a very strict friendship together; inasmuch that when the Gardener was weary of working, and lay down to take a little nap, the baboon, out of affection, stayed all the while by him, and kept off the flies from his face. One day as the Gardener lay down to sleep at the foot of a tree, and the baboon stood by, according to his custom, to drive away the flies, it happened that one of those insects did light upon the Gardener's mouth, and still as the baboon drove it away from one side, it would light on the other; which put the baboon into such a passion that he took up a great stone to kill it. It is true he did kill the fly; but at the same time he broke out two or three of the Gardener's teeth. From whence men of judgment observe that you have to know the tune as well as the words.

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# SCIENTIFIC FILMS IN BRITAIN

## By FOUR-WAY

CIVIL DEFENCE artists parade in the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Political and war training pamphlets monopolise the book-stalls. Aesthetics is being shown the door. Art is at the stake takes one nowhere if one is stalking a U.X.B. or getting ready for a second front. But aesthetics is still strong, still kicking, even though its kicks may be the kicks of its death throes. The war kids too many people into believing that our intellectual junk shops have been bombed every time the shutters are put up temporarily.

In films, at any rate the aesthetic approach is being eaten up by the practical "What can I learn from this?" approach. The series, *Canada Carries On*, and *Fire Guard*, to quote two widely differing examples, make this plain. Not that the change is a new one. In Britain it dates at least from *Drifters* and from the time when the British gas industry decided to base its film programmes on sociology rather than on beauty or sales talk. But the war has speeded up the change enormously. It has rearranged the values of movie making by evolving a new set of box-office criteria. "Is it true?" is beginning to take the place of "Is it entertainment?" Which means that this is one of the periods of history when public taste is in advance of public leadership—one of the periods when the leaders may be asked to give account of their stewardship.

This change in public taste and public values is shown significantly in the growth of the scientific film movement, which has taken place almost wholly within the war period and has overtaken, in a matter of two years, ten years of stately motion of what may be called the cultural film society movement.

The origins of the earlier cultural type of film society, and the scientific film society are a study in comparative sociology. The former was started in 1925 by a group of people particularly interested in the art and technique of making films. Through these early film societies Russian and German classics were screened. The names of Eisenstein and Lubitsch began to come into the same sentences as Aldous Huxley and Virginia Woolfe. The cultural film society movement helped to turn the film from the popular mythology it had been tied 1925 into an "art" and an "industry" (Compare *Shoulder Arms with The Dictator*). In short, the cultural film society movement, by creating standards of criticism, helped to make the film industry respectable. But the cultural film society movement was—and is—primarily interested in films as films; it has usually avoided the consideration of films as a social force, though the progressive Edinburgh Film Guild is arranging programmes designed to explain the outlook, cultural and economic life of various countries.

The Scientific Film Society movement was started in 1937 by the Association of Scientific Workers. In that year the Association set up a Scientific Films Committee (a Film Study Group had been active since 1936) "to further the interests of the scientific film, co-ordinating and improving on what is already being done . . .".

The Association of Scientific Workers had, of course, no interest in films as such, but it held that its function as a trade union representing working scientists could not be fully developed

until there was better public understanding of the work of scientists and of the scientific method. The scientific film was one obvious weapon to achieve this purpose.

In detail, the Scientific Films Committee was charged "to make . . . a complete file of information concerning (a) scientific films available graded according to merit; (b) projection equipment available . . ." It was to maintain a panel of scientific advisers to aid film producers, and a panel of film producers to aid scientists. It was to issue certificates of merit to suitable films, to produce films and to arrange shows of films "on a national scale".

Of these various duties, only the first—the compilation of graded lists of films, and the last—the arranging of film shows on a national scale, have been fully developed.

The Scientific Films Committee set up panels of film viewers and began to go through all the available scientific films, assessing them for accuracy of subject matter, clarity of exposition, and suitability for various types of audience. The conclusions of the viewing panels are published from time to time.

In 1938, the Scientific Films Committee was responsible for starting the London Scientific Film Society—the first of its kind, and now running independently of the Association of Scientific Workers. In the same year the A.S.W. arranged a series of important scientific film shows in Cambridge, and in 1939 Nan Clow started the Scientific Film Club of Aberdeen.

Today there are no less than seven flourishing scientific film societies in Scotland alone—at Aberdeen, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dalmellington, Glasgow, Kilmarnock, and Prestwick—all save the first started since the war. In England, with the exception of the London Scientific Film Society (which survived the blitz with difficulty but is now flourishing) there were, till recently, no organised societies, though local A.S.W. committees arranged no less than fifty-one shows in the eight months ending May 1942. There are now signs that England will follow the lead of Scotland and set up formally constituted film societies. (Sporadic shows—however successful—cannot hope to become growing points of public interest.)

At first there were some differences of opinion between those who thought that the A.S.W. should support only "films of pure science", and those who thought it should support also films illustrating the relations between science and society; between those who thought the Scientific Films Committee should represent mainly scientists who wished to see films, and those who considered the Committee's principal duty to be the interpretation of science to the public through the medium of films. These difficulties were, however, academic and disappeared as soon as the Committee proved its usefulness by undertaking both types of duty, and by arranging to book complete programmes of scientific films for anyone who required them, compiling each programme according to the tastes of the audience to be catered for.

In April, 1941, the Scientific Films Committee published a Memorandum\* distinguishing between the film of instruction and the film of interpretation, urging the need for the wide and organised distribution of scientific films and

drawing attention to serious gaps in the subjects covered by existing films. (Scottish teachers, through the Scottish Educational Film Association, had already drawn up a list of subjects on which films were urgently needed.)

By early 1942, the Scientific Film movement had developed to such an extent that it was possible to hold a National Scientific Film Conference. The tone of the conference was set by the notice convening the London Session, part of which read:

"If we are to avoid disastrous mistakes in social planning, both during and after the war, it is vitally necessary that there should be a widespread understanding of the scientific method. The creative potentialities of science need to be brought vividly into the consciousness of every citizen. . . . Enormous potential audiences are ready, in the factories, in Civil Defence, and in the Armed Forces. . . . The general purpose of this Conference is to see that the films are brought to the audiences."

There were two sessions, the first at Ayr on Saturday and Sunday, August 1st and 2nd, the second in London on August 16th. Arthur Elton took the chair during the afternoon meetings at each session.

At the Ayr session, 33 delegates attended, representing 27 organisations including the 7 Scottish Film Societies and such organisations as the Glasgow Corporation, G-B, Instructional, the Educational Institute of Scotland, together with two delegates representing London interests and delegates from Nottingham (Boots' Cine Club), Birmingham, and other English towns. The Saturday morning meeting was taken up with reports from the Scottish Film Societies and the passing of resolutions, subsequently endorsed by the London session, and discussed below. The afternoon meeting was opened by the chairman, who pointed out that just as the Cultural Film Society had had a profound effect on the film by creating critical standards, so could the Scientific Film Society movement have an equally profound influence. To win this war efficiently, economically and equitably, it was necessary that we should become a nation of scientists. Not highbrows immersed in technique, but citizens with minds oriented methodically to environment. Seven other speakers discussed practical problems of setting up societies, choosing programmes, and film appreciation.

On the Saturday evening there was an exhibition of amateur scientific films, one on Blood Transfusion, one to recruit women into industry, and one on a deficiency disease in sheep. The makers of these films were primarily interested in conveying a useful message. From this it followed that each film was of greater than local importance, for each could be used (and in two cases was already being used) in the Scottish libraries as a direct part of the war effort. For as soon as the amateur gives up competing with the professional in terms of film technique, camera movement or acting, and begins to compete with him in terms of clarity of exposition or intrinsic social importance of subject matter, the amateur is on level terms with the professional, or even at an advantage over him. In fact, the amateur ceased to be an amateur; he becomes professional.

\*See D.N.L., Vol. ix, No. 4, page 61.

†See D.N.L., Vol. ix, No. 7, page 101.

The London session was attended by 105 people, representing 28 organisations, the Press, members of the general public, Scientific Film Societies and others. The session endorsed the resolutions passed in Scotland which, with new resolutions, have become the national policy of the Scientific Film movement. The main decisions of the meeting may be summarised as follows:

- (1) There shall be an English Scientific Film Association similar to the Scottish Scientific Film Association already set up. The two Associations shall be financially independent of each other, self-governing and local in character. The Associations will be primarily concerned with the domestic detail of viewing films, arranging programmes and instigating film shows and Film Societies.
- (2) Both Associations shall be embraced in a

National Scientific Film Federation, which shall be a central authority devoted to national planning and execution.

- (3) The Associations and the Federation are to call on all bodies making or commissioning films, inviting them to encourage and finance the production of scientific films.
  - (4) Education and welfare officers, the Services, Civil Defence Service units, including the Home Guard, and factory managements and trade unions, shall be urged to use the scientific film for educational purposes.
  - (5) The Kinematograph Renters Association and the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association were urged to increase the number of scientific films in the public programmes.
- Such were the decisions and recommendations

of the first National Conference. From this, it is hoped, will spring a national scientific film movement, geared to the war effort. Clearly, the Federation has within it the possibility of something very important after the war, but the speakers, evidently believing that it is easy to think so much about what will come after the war that the conduct of the war itself is forgotten, only called attention to this point in passing. The meeting had not time to consider in detail relationships with other countries, but it was hoped that, even in war, there will be a free exchange of scientific films. Not only can such an exchange of films serve a short-term purpose in war education, but each film will carry something of the spirit of the country which made it, and will help each country to understand the economics, outlook and culture of its neighbours.

## 5-MINUTE FILMS FOR APRIL-JULY, 1942

<i>Title</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>Prod. Unit</i>	<i>Release Date</i>
FILLING THE GAP <sup>1</sup> .. ..	Dig for Victory .. ..	—	Realist & Halas-Batchelor	6/4
THE OWNER GOES ALOFT	National Savings .. ..	Ivan Scott .. ..	Spectator .. ..	13/4
THE MIDDLE EAST .. ..	The strategy of the Middle East	G. Tharp .. ..	S.F.U. .. ..	20/4
BALLOON SITE 568 .. ..	W.A.A.F.s at work .. ..	I. Moffatt .. ..	Strand .. ..	27/4
MEN OF INDIA <sup>2</sup> .. ..	India's industrial effort .. ..	Ezra Mir .. ..	Indian F.U. .. ..	4/5
GO TO BLAZES .. ..	Dealing with an incendiary bomb	Walter Forde .. ..	Ealing .. ..	11/5
FREE FRENCH NAVY .. ..	French naval units at sea .. ..	R. Carruthers .. ..	Spectator .. ..	18/5
THE FIVE MEN OF VELISH <sup>3</sup>	Nazis in Russia .. ..	—	Soviet War News Film Agency	25/5
PARTNERS IN CRIME .. ..	The Black Market .. ..	Launder & Gilliat .. ..	Gainsborough .. ..	1/6
WORK PARTY .. ..	The factory effort .. ..	Len Lye .. ..	Realist .. ..	8/6
DOWN OUR STREET .. ..	National Savings .. ..	T. Bishop .. ..	Merton Park .. ..	15/6
WOOD FOR WAR .. ..	Canadian soldiers and lumbermen in Britain	—	Canadian Army F.U. .. ..	22/6
THE RIGHT MAN .. ..	Occupational selection in the Army	—	Army F.U. .. ..	29/6
START A LAND CLUB .. ..	The agricultural effort .. ..	A. Buchanan .. ..	Films of G.B. .. ..	6/7
NEW TOWNS FOR OLD .. ..	Plans for the future .. ..	J. Eldridge .. ..	Strand .. ..	13/7
TROOPSHIP .. ..	The Army en route for the Front	—	Army F.U. .. ..	20/7
DOCKERS .. ..	The industrial effort .. ..	F. Sainsbury .. ..	Realist .. ..	27/7

(1) Cartoon. (2) Re-edited in Britain. (3) Library compilation.

# Newsreels Lack Flavour of War

THE news reels continue to be dull and unimaginative with only an occasional break in the fog which appears to cover most physical manifestations of the world at war. It is alarming to consider to what extent the war has become for British people a battle of words—literary rather than physical. How few are the opportunities either in the press or in the cinema to see what war looks like. From Russia and from Germany has come something of the true flavour, but British and American films rely either on the lath-and-plaster fictions of the studios or upon conventional and stagey news-items not fundamentally dissimilar from those of peace-time.

## Frontline Episode

It is true that from time to time a courageous cameraman will send back scenes of a convoy battle (the recent Malta convoy was an outstanding example) and occasionally a correspondent will convey the immediacy and emotion of a frontline episode. (Genock and Rose of Paramount have given us graphic war pictures and moving commentaries to go with them.) Apart from these purple passages we find only manoeuvres and inspections with a little sport or comedy for relief.

It may, of course, be argued that what we lack is a war-front adequately exciting for the purposes of the camera. In support of this case it must be admitted that the Libya coverage and the recent scenes in Egypt have shown almost everything that could be revealed by the camera. Yet the lack of fighting to photograph is not a complete reason for the present newsreel deficiency.

It is not only on the battlefield that war has a physical and photographable existence. Total war is something which influences the whole life of a people.

## Workers of Britain

Imaginative newsreel treatment would succeed in conveying to the screen the facts of war by the presentation of episodes which are to be found at the very doors of the newsreel offices. There is no need to go to the front to photograph a war of the people. Let us see the citizens and workers of Britain in their homes and at their benches and see what they are like and what they are doing. Let us have personal anecdotes of the contribution of individual men and women and children to the total power of a nation at war. Let us pick individuals out from the crowd and tell their stories briefly with skill and imagination. These cameos will—as examples—have a strong propaganda value. They will also possess that quality of humanity which the newsreels have always most lacked; the quality which because it is lacking now, prevents the newsreels from showing us Britain at war. From the beginning of their history the newsreels have never been deeply and intimately interested in people. Until this is changed they will never give us the realism which should be their principal characteristic.

# RADIO Work of the Feature Department

The B.B.C. gets kicked about a good deal for the programmes it puts out, day in and day out, year in year out—and who are we to say the kicks aren't, in general, well deserved? But by casting around the wastelands of the *Radio Times* you can occasionally pick up the scent of something important, and more often than not it will be a production by the Feature Department.

B.B.C. features correspond in part to documentary films. They are concerned with both long and short term propaganda as well as with attempts to keep the small pennant of "culture" flying among the forests of banners proclaiming the joys of Vera Lynn, cinema organisers and what not.

The Feature Department is in charge of Laurence Gilliam, a B.B.C. old-timer who has never lost his integrity. Under him works a team of producers including Louis MacNeice, Stephen Potter, D. G. Bridson, John Glyn Jones, Walter Rilla, Robert Barr and Maurice Brown. Technically these people are not afraid to experiment. Ideologically they are putting out material which, a few years ago, the directorate at Broadcasting House would almost certainly have frowned on.

## Worth-while Programmes

People interested in the documentary technique might do worse than make a comparative study of the work of the Feature people. Here are a few programmes to look out for:

*Marching On* (every Thursday at 9.40). Produced by John Glyn Jones and Robert Barr. This is a

thirty minute programme with a lot of guts. It takes the latest news and dramatises it—often putting it in a new perspective. Often concentrates on events which owing to paper shortage get crowded out of the dailies. Cracks jokes—often neat and political. Chief fault: tendency to over-sentimentalise things. Chief merit: by means of amazingly good teamwork, manages to put across spot-news in a constructive instead of scatty manner.

*Contemporary Portraits*. Produced usually by Stephen Potter. Dramatised biographies of living people, for instance Lord Nuffield, Fay Compton and Low. Variable in quality (perhaps according to subject). Perhaps a few portraits of ordinary folk without fame or notoriety would pep this series up.

*New Judgments*. Writers of to-day re-value writers of the past, often with dramatic reconstructions. Plums so far have been V. I. S. Pritchett on Defoe, James Bridie on Barrie, and Elizabeth Bowen on Jane Austen.

*Black Gallery* (usually produced by Walter Rilla). A series of violent smacks at various Axis leaders. Variable—sometimes tough and vicious—sometimes puerile.

The "Salute" Series. Louis MacNeice's *Salute to the United Nations* was one of the most imaginative broadcasts ever. MacNeice productions are always worth an ear.

## "Yes, Yes, Dr. Johnson, but . . ."

"A MAN," said Dr. Johnson, "is never more usefully employed than when earning money".

"But", as Grindon remarked, "there is another maxim fully as important, and founded on as great a principle, and that is, the INTERVALS of business must be attended to. No one can sharpen his intellectual faculties, or widen the range of his knowledge, without becoming more skilful and successful in the business or profession in which he is engaged".

So, for pleasure and profit, read, every week, the

**Kine** *matograph*  
**WEEKLY**

39 LONG ACRE : : LONDON : : W.C. 2



## Film Society News

### Scottish Churches Film Guild

Slowly, but surely, the Church of Scotland is becoming film conscious. True, war conditions have greatly hindered this development, but they have not arrested it. While the more outlying branches of the Scottish Churches Film Guild had to suspend their activities owing to most of the leaders being away on some form of service, in Glasgow and Edinburgh a good deal was done during last winter and spring to bring the religious film before people's notice. In Glasgow during a special Week of Witness, in which all the Protestant Churches took part, films were shown at Rallies held in various Picture Houses; others were used at district meetings of teachers held under the auspices of the Scottish Sunday School Union, and visits were paid to a military hospital and to canteens. The work of reviewing new films was maintained, and two classes of instruction in the use of the projector were held. In Edinburgh, nine reviewing meetings and five open displays were held. Interest was added to a number of these by having talks by experts on the more technical side of film production.

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, held in May, a committee appointed last year to advise on the use of films in the Church made its report. The committee strongly recommended that the Church should make every effort to utilise this modern medium of instruction and inspiration for its own purpose; and the Assembly appointed a permanent Committee whose business it will be to co-ordinate the work already being done by certain departments of the Church, to do everything in their power to encourage the production of films suitable for Church purposes, and to form a centre to which ministers might apply for guidance and help in organising film displays.

It was reported to the Assembly that under the auspices of the Edinburgh Presbytery an experiment had been made during the winter in holding Film Services in five of the Edinburgh churches. Some twenty such services were held in all, and the majority of them were said to have been thoroughly successful. Some of the films had proved disappointing.

It becomes increasingly clear that if we can only get the right kind of films there is a great future for film-work in the Church.

The Devon and Exeter Film Society hopes to continue activities. It has recently been in abeyance through disorganisation caused by enemy raids.

### British Oxygen Co. Films

Members of scientific film societies will be interested to learn that the British Oxygen Co. Ltd. has issued a catalogue of their library of 16mm. educational films. These films have been employed as a supplement to the practical and theoretical lectures given in their instructional classes. They are available on loan, free of charge (except for return postage) to all bona-fide lecturers, institutions, schools, clubs, etc., and at least ten days' notice should be given by the borrower.

The address is: The Photographic (Publicity) Dept., The British Oxygen Co. Ltd., North Circular Road, Cricklewood, London, N.W.2.

## THE FIRST OF A NEW SERIES OF FILMS—

## THE B.B.C. BRAINS TRUST

**has been completed**

Those taking part:

*Commander Campbell  
Rt. Hon. Col. Walter Elliot  
Professor Julian Hurley  
Professor C.E.M. Joad  
Miss Jennie Lee*

QUESTION MASTER:

*Donald McCulloch*

PRODUCERS:

*Howard Thomas and Donald Taylor*

No. 1 will be ready for commercial distribution in September.  
No. 2 now in production.

## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SILAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

Offices: 1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

Tel.: GERRARD 6304/5.

Studios: NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

Tel.: ELSTREE 1644.

# Washington plans wider use of film for Educational Purposes after war

Reprinted by kind permission of the  
"Motion Picture Herald."

By JOHN STUART, Jr.

WHEN the war is over the United States Department of State hopes to be in the motion pictures business in a major way.

Plans are maturing, it is learned in Washington, substantially to increase the motion picture activities of the Department's Division of Cultural Relations. For the present this increasing interest in the screen is to be confined to the non-theatrical motion picture.

The department charged with the administration of the country's foreign affairs is carrying on its current screen work through existing emergency and permanent government agencies with authorized film programmes. State Department appropriations for its own motion picture section are small in comparison with the screen budgets of other agencies. The current fund is said to be less than \$50,000 a year.

But through the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Office of War Information, the film division founded by Colonel William Donovan (formerly Co-ordinator of Information) and other agencies the State Department is voicing an increasingly potent say on what kind of non-commercial, non-theatrical pictures shall be sent to other nations with Government blessing, or direct sponsorship.

Looking ahead to the day when peace comes, certain officers in the State Department foresee curtailment of the motion picture activities of these emergency agencies, and a slash in the huge film funds which many of them are now expending. They hope that much of this overseas screen exchange will revert to the State Department. It is possible that a permanent motion picture production and distribution machinery may be set up within the division of cultural relations, operating on a permanent budget.

The exchange of non-theatrical motion pictures with other nations would be undertaken by the department. All countries would be included, not just the Latin American republics, the United Nations and friendly neutrals. The objective would be the free display of pictures about the U.S. in other countries, and the exhibition here, through educational and other outlets, of pictures about the rest of the world.

## Interchange of 16 mm.

"There would be a huge interchange of cultural, scientific and educational information via 16 mm. pictures specially produced or edited," one source close to the project explained. He discounted the "propaganda" aspects of such a programme, asserting that there is great curiosity about the United States, and its customs and

traditions. The film programme would be merely an official attempt to fill this need, he said. It is envisioned as a potent force for good will and understanding.

The entertainment, and commercial motion pictures previously sent abroad have not been sufficiently specialised or accurate, it was said. The type of picture envisioned for cultural exchange would be 16 mm. scientific, educational and documentary reels presenting "in vivid and dramatic form" pictures of U.S. civilisation.

At present the Department of State, through the division of cultural relations, is working jointly with the Inter-American and War Information agencies. Their productions must be submitted to the State Department for review prior to export. Foreign missions of the State Department, through the cultural attaches now stationed in them, participate in the distribution of these pictures.

## Suitability

A reviewing committee, representing the principal divisions within the department, is charged with looking at the pictures to determine their suitability for the countries for which they are destined. The department also will examine other commercial or educational non-theatrical pictures destined for free circulation abroad. If it approves them they may bear official U.S. sanction.

How this machinery works was described in *Motion Picture Herald* for October 11, 1941.

There have been reports of frequent friction, however, between other Government agencies and the State Department. The producing agencies have charged the State Department with delaying their programmes with red tape, and slow approval by the reviewing committee. Also, they have expressed off-the-record irritation at many of the changes in pictures or scripts which the State Department has asked before sanctioning their distribution through the cultural attaches.

To smooth this liaison the Division of Cultural Relations is now seeking to expand its film staff. Also, these new additions would be the nucleus of a post-war organisation.

## Overseas

Technical consultants, film distribution experts and contact men who can handle overseas requests for special subjects are joining the staff. Their salaries, in several instances, will be paid out of the special Inter-American funds and they will be in direct liaison with the Rockefeller office.

Also, it is planned to assign film men to many of the principal American missions abroad. They will aid the cultural attaché in exhibiting the free American motion pictures and will obtain native pictures and suggest subjects for exhibition in the

United States. The first of these assignments probably will be made in South America where already 30 of the 16 mm. projectors are in use, and 75 more are on order.

Currently the film programme of the State Department is in charge of John Begg, assistant chief of cultural relations. With a small staff, headed by Irene Wright, historian and for many years the supervisor of all the State Department film work, he has administered the exhibition of the Rockefeller office pictures and requests for State Department review of pictures destined for South America. He has a background of newsreel work in the Courtland Smith organisation.

Charles A. Thomson is chief of cultural relations. He is the former Latin American editor of the Foreign Policy Association.

According to Mr. Begg, there is already evidence of a great post-war demand for non-theatrical pictures from the United States. He cited figures from the Rockefeller committee's exhibitions in South America, showing an audience increase within six months from 6,000 to 100,000 persons monthly. This, he declared, is just touching the surface of the field. Technical, scientific, instruction and ideological pictures are all receiving an enthusiastic reception, he said.

## Post-war films

Special production will be required for many of the post-war motion pictures, it was said. The facilities of Hollywood as well as the documentary and non-theatrical producers would be used, on contract, to make the special reels and to adapt existing pictures. Many would be scored in foreign languages while others, particularly the technical and scientific pictures destined for limited audiences, would be sent abroad with written translations of the English titles and sound track.

## CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR

Sir, To see the better Ministry of Information films one at a time is sometimes quite pleasant. To see a miscellaneous batch of home and overseas, theatrical and non-theatrical, all at the same time, is one of the most unpleasant surprises that anyone who is interested in winning the war, in giving a good impression to our allies, or in film making, could possibly have. These are the films that were shown:

*The day that saved the world.* A long reel: the subject in the Ministry's own words, "Proving that Britain won the first victory over the Nazis."

*Poland's New Front.* The Polish army in Russia.

*Newfoundland at war.* Visual letters home from the Newfoundland soldiers, sailors and airmen.

*Free house.* A five-minuter of sailors from all the allied navies proving through the example of beer why things have got to be different after the war.

*India in action.* A tribute to Indian troops who have fought in the various African battles.

*Women away from home.* A five-minuter explaining how women who go away to work in factories get on.

Individually one or two of the films weren't too bad; but collectively they were just depressing.

The M.O.I. Films Division will undoubtedly say the films were not supposed to be seen together, and in some months' time I expect they will also be able to say that the individual films like *Newfoundland at war* were very successful in the countries or special fields for which they were made. But all the same, seeing a collection of Ministry films together is pretty depressing. The reason: because in the whole lot there was not a shred of hope, not a constructive idea; there was nothing definitely negative about them, but there was certainly nothing even approaching positive.

It is no good comparing them to Russian films: the circumstances are so different. But try Canada: here is a country that in itself has been fairly remote from the war. But the films that they have produced have been vital and hopeful: people may disagree about the style, but at the end you are stimulated, and Canada, the war, and life, seem just a bit easier.

Britain obviously has no policy: not even a dishonest one. The Films Division's policy seems to be to give the public all the factual information that you can—don't try and clear up what is happening politically or with the war—don't put out any positive ideas—just stick to information and you will be all right—if you do go off the information line the films won't be shown anyway. We are not going to risk our jobs for any films.

The memorandum they put out the other day for feature producers on what was good and what was bad, was sound and sensible—the only trouble is that the Ministry—maybe because of pressure from above and lack of fighting spirit in themselves—can't—won't—don't try to make films themselves on the lines of their own memorandum.

The personnel of the Films Division is better than most similar people in the Civil Service. They have produced a vast number of films: they have succeeded despite the film trade in getting them shown. If they were replaced the next lot would probably be fifty times worse—we've all seen a British Council film. But even so it is worth their time and the one hundred odd people who make the films time—to go on turning out this information stuff? It is time they sat down quietly and had a look what is on their credit side and what is on their debit side. They have reached a peak on production and distribution, they haven't even started climbing on vitality, hope, honesty—determination.

If they are being held down from above it is time they made a fight for it, win or lose. If they don't the Films Division and the people they employ to make their films are wasted man-power, materials and money.

*Yours, etc.,*

REWINDER.

## SHORTS BOOKINGS AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

(The following shorts bookings are selected from a list covering its members supplied by the News & Specialised Theatres Association.)

	Week commencing
<b>A Modern Miracle</b>	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Sept. 14
<b>All the World's a Stage</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	14th
<b>Arrow Points</b>	
The Classic, Portsmouth	13th
<b>At the Country Fair</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	6th
<b>Australia Marches with Britain</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	6th
<b>Beautiful Britain</b>	
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	Aug. 30th
<b>Birds in Spring</b>	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	23rd
<b>Calling All Girls</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Sept. 6th
<b>Cavalade of Aviation</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	7th
The Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	13th
<b>Coastline</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Aug. 30th
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	Sept. 13th
<b>Flashing Blades</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	Sept. 6th
<b>Gardens of England</b>	
The Classic, Baker Street, W.1	Aug. 30th
The News Theatre, Leeds	31st
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	Sept. 6th
<b>Gettine His Wings</b>	
The News Theatre, Birmingham	Aug. 23rd
The News Theatre, Manchester	30th
<b>Heroes of the Atlantic</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	23rd
The News Theatre, Leeds	31st
<b>Highway of Friendship</b>	
Eros, W.1	No. 30th
Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Sept. 6th
<b>Historic Virginia</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Aug. 23rd
<b>Information No. 5—Wendell Willkie Guest of Honour</b>	
The Vogue, S.W.17	Sept. 6th
<b>Information Phase No. 12</b>	
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	Aug. 23rd
<b>John Bull's Other Army</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Sept. 6th
<b>Journey in Tunisia</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	6th
<b>Junior Battle Fleet</b>	
Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Aug. 23rd
<b>Man Who Chained the World</b>	
Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	Sept. 13th
<b>March of Time No. 13—7th Year</b>	
Classic, S.W.17	Aug. 23rd
<b>March of Time No. 1, 8th Year—Indian Crisis</b>	
The Vogue, S.W.17	30th
Classic, Hendon, N.W.4	30th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Sept. 13th
<b>March of Time No. 2, 8th Year—India at War</b>	
Classic, Baker Street, W.1	Aug. 23rd
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	23rd
<b>World's News Theatre, W.2</b>	
Victoria Street News Theatre, S.W.1	24th
Classic, Southampton	30th
<b>News Theatre, Aberdeen</b>	
Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	Sept. 6th
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	6th
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	6th
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	7th
Tatler Theatre, Chester	7th
The News Theatre, Leeds	7th
<b>Mickey's Birthday</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	6th
<b>Miracle Makers</b>	
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Aug. 30th
<b>Modern New Orleans</b>	
Classic, South Croydon	Sept. 6th
<b>Morning Paper</b>	
The News Theatre, Birmingham	6th
The News Theatre, Bristol	13th
The News Theatre, Leeds	14th
<b>Nature's Artisans</b>	
The News Theatre, Leeds	7th
<b>Nature's U-Boats</b>	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Aug. 24th
Tatler Theatre, Chester	31st
<b>Our Film</b>	
Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	Sept. 6th
The News Theatre, Bristol	13th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	13th
<b>Over the Downs</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Birmingham	13th
<b>Paint Pots</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	6th
<b>Peaceful Quebec at War</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	13th
<b>Ships of the Sea</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	Aug. 30th
<b>So you think you know Mase</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Sept. 6th
<b>So Now You Know</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	13th
<b>Song of the Clyde</b>	

The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Week commencing Aug. 23rd
Soviet Schoolchild	
The News Theatre, Leeds	24th
<b>Supernatural No. 2</b>	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Sept. 14th
<b>Take it or Leave it No. 4</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	13th
<b>The African To-day</b>	
Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	6th
<b>The Fighting 69th and a Half</b>	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Aug. 31st
<b>Thrills of the Sea</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	30th
<b>Through the Woods</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	16th
<b>Trees</b>	
The News Theatre, Aberdeen	Sept. 6th
<b>U-Boats in the Pond</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	6th
<b>Where Four Continents Meet</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Aug. 23rd
<b>Wine Serenade</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	24th

### FEATURE REVIEWS

<b>Bitter Sweet</b>	
Classic, S.W.17	Aug. 30th
Classic, South Croydon	30th
<b>Divorce of Lady X</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	24th
<b>General Savaris</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	17th
<b>Freedom Radio</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	Sept. 7th
<b>Hurricane</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	14th
<b>It's a Date</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	6th
<b>Jennie</b>	
Classic, S.W.17	7th
<b>Major Barbara</b>	
Classic, S.W.17	Aug. 23rd
Classic, South Croydon	30th
Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	Sept. 6th
<b>No, No, Nanette</b>	
Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	Aug. 30th
<b>Prymation</b>	
Classic, Southampton	23rd
<b>The Duke of Westpoint</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	24th
<b>Till We Meet Again</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Sept. 14th
<b>Tooper Takes a Trip</b>	
Tatler Theatre, Chester	Aug. 31st
<b>Victory</b>	
Classic, Baker Street, W.1	30th

# SIGHT and SOUND

## The Autumn Issue

is now  
**OUT**

6d.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,  
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

SEPT., 1942

## CONTENTS

TODAY NOT TOMORROW	121
NOTES OF THE MONTH	122
M.O.L.—WHAT PLANS HAVE YOU?	123
SPIRITUAL OFFENSIVE	124
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	125
WAR-TIME FILM PLANS IN U.S.	126
FILM OF THE MONTH	128
CANADIAN FILM BOARD AT WORK	129
FILM SOCIETIES	130
TO INSTRUCTIONAL FILM MAKERS	131
SHORTS BOOKINGS	132

VOL 3 NO 9

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## TODAY NOT TOMORROW

THE PRIME MINISTER, reporting to the House of Commons on the Russian position, said that he had found it difficult to explain to the Russians the problems of this country in failing to come more rapidly to Russia's assistance. He said that it was difficult for a great land power to understand the difficulties facing a great sea power in planning any considerable offensive. While this lack of understanding is bad for political reasons, it is a disgraceful reflection on our information and propaganda services, that after so many months of association, we have still not explained ourselves, or our contribution to the war effort, to our Ally.

How badly we have failed is well illustrated by recent newspaper despatches from Russia on our film showing and distribution there. Films are a method of propaganda and information well recognised by the Russians, and a medium that they have powerfully and successfully used in this country. Apart from the deep sympathy for a country that is carrying the major burden of a war, the people of this country have been given a greater appreciation of Russia through the amazingly good film propaganda they have done. There is no doubt that we have the films to do a similar job in Russia. In quantity and quality of production there is a great body of films that would give the Russian people an accurate picture of our contribution to the joint effort.

There is no doubt, as the Prime Minister has endorsed, that the Russian Government and people are profoundly disturbed by our seemingly small contribution. Yet we have a great story to tell—we carried the burden of the fight against Fascism alone for a long period—we are now making a great effort in the weakening of Fascist resources. That story is on the screen, but it does not get to Russia. It appears that a certain few films have been sent, but at least one of them was not well calculated to improve Anglo-Russian relations.

There are two instances in recent newspaper reports: in the first, a report on a two-day congress arranged by the Soviet Film Committee and Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. At the congress all the great figures of the Soviet cinema spoke—Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovzhenko—and *The Times* man who reported the congress said that, "it was inevitably mainly of the American cinema that most of those who took part spoke, though British newsreel operators were mentioned by the director of that remarkable documentary film *Leningrad at War*, . . . British documentary films, the most notable achievement of the British film industry, appear to be virtually unknown here.

"Speakers were interested in the cinema as a political instrument

and urged that the Western film industry, with all its immense technique and experience, should now concentrate on the task of interpreting the war." It appeared that British films, at the congress, were represented by the *Private Life of Henry VIII* and a newsreel of a Mediterranean convoy. *The Times* correspondent went on to say that, "it is to be hoped that before long steps will be taken to bring to Moscow a representative collection of British documentary films which, even if they are shown only to a restricted audience, would aid much to cement the cultural relations that are growing, in spite of all difficulties, between the Allies."

The second instance is the message sent by the film workers of Russia to British film workers. In their message they said that they had seen the films entitled *London Holds Out*, *British A.A. Gunners*, *Women in the Air Service*, and other films.

It is disgraceful after so many months and with such a wealth of film telling our story, that we should be represented in this way in Russia. Many tales are told of transport difficulties; in fact *The Times* in a leader, said it considered the matter of vital importance, and stated that only six pounds a fortnight can be sent by air and a package takes three months by sea to get to Kuibyshev. But Russia has been in the war a long time and we have made a great many films for a long time, and an aged feature film and a newsreel is surely not well calculated to give the Russian film workers a good impression of the job which Britain is doing to interpret the war. Presumably the transport problem cuts both ways, and if Russia can flood this country, indeed she has flooded all the Allied countries, with film, these difficulties of transportation may be ones of imagination or incompetence. There is a rumour that a ton of film has been in a warehouse in a country adjacent to Russia. That kind of excuse is not good enough. We can explain ourselves to Russia, and film is by far the best medium. To quote *The Times* leader in conclusion:—

"This is the more deplorable in that we have just the kind of film which Russian people would be likely to appreciate. Into the development of British 'documentaries', which set out to dramatise the worker, the organisation in which he works and the social problems which beset him, there has gone more energetic thinking and more integrity of purpose than into any other kind of English film. They have been made not with one speculative eye on what it might please a particular audience to be shown, but with the simple minded purpose of studying their subjects and of disengaging from them what is significant. As evidence of what we are doing and of what we are, they have the impartiality of honest art."



# NOTES OF THE MONTH

## Five Minutes and Trailers

EXHIBITORS, especially independents, have given thousands of hours of free running time to the country and on top of that have booked and paid for quite a number of the better propaganda films.

But there are also some cinemas, especially among the circuits, who have never shown a five-minuter and quite a large number, 50 per cent, who go to the trouble of cutting the trailers off the end of the newsreel.

The excuse is usually that there is not time to fit the 1½ minute trailer or the 6½ minute film into the programmes. Quite a number of these cinemas have found time to run advertising films however.

Now, not running an ordinary propaganda film is not helping the country or the war. But recently the Ministry issued a film called *A New Fire Bomb* and it was of vital importance that everyone in the country should see the film immediately. Even this film on which the lives of people actually depend, was not run in some cinemas. Knowing the exhibitors' love of business you would have thought that they would have been inclined to run it just to keep their audience alive so that they could continue coming to the cinema. But joking apart, any exhibitor who did not run this film moves from the unpatriotic class and becomes an actual traitor.

## Falling Stars

IT IS THE film stars. At the age of seventeen, dewy and innocent, they commence their careers. If they are lucky, they may make the grade somewhere around the age of twenty-three, still dewy but hardly as innocent. Featured players, lovely, young, the delight of the camera. The world is at their feet, every advertisement, every magazine, tells us the charming secrets of their blameless private lives. The box office gives them a welcome which, if it is not enthusiastic, does at least show promise of better things to come. They shine brightly for a few films, sometimes their names even figure in front of the film's title in the advertisements. Clark Gable and Miss So-and-So with the magic, prestige-giving word, IN, after the much plugged name. They look as though they are set for stardom. But then comes a kind of a shadow, a lull in this busy career. The bright star fades a little. Interest wanes. How many pretty faces can one dimly remember fading, fading, only to be remembered when the yellowing leaves of some old film magazine are idly turned. Youth and beauty and a tiny talent are obviously not enough.

To this story there are exceptions. The lives of those whom somebody so aptly called the cinemopets must be another kind of hell,

first trying to look years older than they are and then, as time's withering hand falls, trying desperately to look years younger.

The names which delight us and the box office have been with us many, many years. We pay to see Jean Arthur, Garbo, Claudette Colbert, Myrna Loy, Dietrich, Margaret Sullivan, Bette Davis. Even among the men, to whom presumably age should not offer such perils, it is Gable, Boyer, Crosby, Gabin, Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy to see whom we willingly pay our shillings. With due respect to our acknowledged favourites and at the risk of seeming ungallant we suggest that none of these charmers, male and female, could be called chickens. Many years of hard work and lots of experience have brought them to the top. Compare luscious Miss Lana Turner with Miss Dietrich. Miss Turner has youth and even more than it takes, but somehow Miss Dietrich makes much more of a mark. And yet Hollywood is thought of as a paradise of youth. Many years have passed since *The Atonement* of Gosta Berling, *Ten Cents a Dance*, *The Blue Angel*, *Manslaughter*, *The Man who Played God* and the Fu Manchu films showed us Garbo, Stanwyck, Dietrich, Colbert, Bette Davis and Jean Arthur, all of them still stars even if they have, in their long careers, suffered temporary eclipses. Can you remember Myrna Loy as a perpetual Eastern temptress, Ginger Rogers as a chorus girl with a couple of lions, William Powell a snake in the desert? It all took place many years ago. And yet it must be admitted that one gesture of any of these favourites is worth all the curves of an Oomph, Ping or Ting-a-ling girl or any bronzed young man however laughing his torso.

So pity the poor dears, who in the flush of youth, when Nature is with them, beck and nod and wreathed smile included, know that the laurels of true stardom cannot be won until they present more than somewhat of a problem to the camera. At the age of twenty-three they have Youth and Beauty, but only passing time, brushing them gently here and there, giving experience but taking the bloom, can give them pre-eminence and the ability to give the perfect and enchanting performance. It must be a hell of a life.

## Comings and Goings

THERE WILL BE a general welcome on both sides of the Atlantic to the appointment of George Archibald to take charge of official British film activities in the United States. No one is better equipped by experience and temperament for the task of bringing into closer and more efficient relationship the use of the film as a weapon of war in the two countries. Archibald's main job will be to build up in America a wide distribution of films calculated to present a picture of Britain, the British war effort and the British vision of the future (if any should be officially forthcoming). In addition to this, however, his presence will contribute substantially to the gearing together of the propaganda machines of the two continents. Archibald is a man of wide experience with many contacts and interests outside the world of film. It is his experience as the head of United Artists' European organisation which gives him his first qualification for his present post, but his early days as a lawyer and his recent experiences as a farmer, together with his contacts with politics and civil defence (as Deputy Regional Commissioner for the Midlands) will make him a figure of some significance in the American scene.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER has been pressing for a long time for the appointment of qualified overseas representatives to assist the film effort. One good appointment has been made and we understand that others are shortly to follow. Let us hope that in making them the Ministry of Information will continue to remember that the war has become now a very practical matter; that it is the man who will get results with his sleeves rolled up in the workshop of his job, rather than the scintillating drawing-room conversationalist, who will most impress our Allies.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey Alexander Shaw Donald Taylor  
John Taylor Basil Wright

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

Owned and published by

FILM CENTRE LTD.

34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W.1 GERRARD 4253

# M.O.I.—WHAT PLANS HAVE YOU?

*A deal of controversy rages around the M.O.I. Film Division. The following two articles, though by different writers, present a similar point of view*

THE harvest is gathered and there is already a slight sharpness in the early morning air. It can be felt in the fields and in the streets and by the open windows. It promises refreshment but it also tells of hard days ahead. Days in which we shall discover whether the work of the summer has been well done, whether the days of preparation were well occupied.

We wonder whether this warning chill has yet penetrated into the labyrinthine corridors of the Ministry of Information. Do those stout walls and wooden-hutted door-keepers insulate against the weather as efficiently as they seem to guard the inhabitants against all other changes in the outside world? We cannot believe that some wanton eddy of cold air has not at least strayed, however daringly, into that particular corridor where the indestructible butterflies of the Films Division still flash and flicker in the shafts of the already departing sun. Where Purple Emperor and Red Admiral, Sulphur Yellow and Camberwell Beauty, Swallowtail and Cabbage White dance and dart about their business as though high summer were eternal.

Perhaps, pretty creatures, they feel that their toil has earned them exemption from winter's rigours as indeed their honest labours have given them a life which, compared with the butterflies' few hours, must seem eternal. But can they keep their colours fresh and their wings strong when the buddleia no longer flowers and the brave young seedlings are cabbages, stiff and lonely in the snow? What plans have our gay and cynical butterflies got to carry them through the dark days? The chill air whispers of destruction for those who are not prepared, the destruction of death, or the worse and living death of working in a vacuum, without results. They have many times in the past given us fresh hope and new visions, but now we ask ourselves whether they have the will to do so in the future.

But enough of these entomological parallels, they have but served to introduce our question. Have the Films Division got a plan for the future, or did they indeed ever even have a plan for the future which is now past? There was a time when the mere fact of their producing films of any kind appeared to be a sort of miracle. When the present gang took over, after months of Civil Service

mumpings and mouthings, they faced a tough task.

But they did manage to get films made and to them must go the credit. They have made all kinds of films, some good, some bad, but good or bad they all possess one grave defect and that defect arises from the fact that, as far as one can tell, the films were made to no plan. At first this lack of planning was not apparent, but as time went on, putting their programme into perspective, it became more and more obvious. Production figures soared. Their films began to cover this country at war. Factories and food, the Services and agriculture, science and the arts. The camera eyes of many units were sent to look at everything and they looked well and honestly. They collected vast libraries of material and they turned them into films. Everybody was busy and enthusiastic.

It was when the Films Division came to inspect these films which they themselves had ordered and the scripts of which they had finally approved, that the minds of the film-makers were troubled. Firstly, these films which had often taken much sweat and toil to produce, occupying many peoples' minds and time, were made to seem of no importance. Officials came to the theatre as to a torture chamber, moaning and groaning as if in anticipation of grievous pain. There were indeed occasions when they bounded in all wreathed with smiles, but the smiles quickly turned to frowns when they discovered that it was not the latest Paramount musical which they had been invited to see.

Then after the showing comes the inquest and here the complete lack of planning begins to show itself.

The officials are prepared to praise or blame, to argue the nicety of a cut or the quality of a piece of sound, to regale the company with their own personal reactions to the film even before it has ceased running. But few ever talk of the film in relation to a programme, whether it supplements another film or whether it falls into its place in a scheme. Few ever discuss whether that film is going to carry any message to anybody or whether the many and varied audiences who will see it will respond to it.

This state of pother continues. Films are ordered and after many struggles with this department and that they get made and

are eventually shown. To what purpose is all this activity?

Surely propaganda, to be effective, must present different aspects but they must all be aspects of the same truth. And where, in any Ministry film is that binding, inspiring, vitalising truth to be found. This film says kill your rats, this film says give your baby black-currant juice, this film says look at Britain enjoying itself, this film says here is a bombing raid and this film says here are the healers at work. All these films give their immediate message more or less well—the dance hall is as large as life, the bombing raid bears the stamp of truth, the rats are artfully destroyed. But nothing adds up, the total effect is only as great as each single film. What has gone before and what is to come raise no cumulative image to inspire and fortify. Yesterday we showed you a factory worker, today we give you food, tomorrow we will show you Russians. Unless we have a bright idea and decide to show you potted shrimps instead.

## The Big Job

Nobody would deny that the films being made are doing part of a good job, but many believe that they could do more. The line is missing, the flaming, burning belief in the message is not there. This belief should run through all the films from rats to Hurricanes, transforming them, integrating them and strengthening them.

That is the big job of the Ministry. There is a job vacant. "Wanted. An Angel complete with flaming sword to guard the Ministry doors and cry continually, 'Embrace Belief all ye who enter here'."

It would need an angel; but in the meantime the Films Division could help by tidying up their house a little. While doing so they might even discover the angel tangled up in the telephone wires or smothered under the memos and minutes. Their organisation and planning seems specifically arranged to produce chaos and nothing else. Their elementary arithmetic is that of the clowns in the harlequinade dividing up the fish.

It would appear that they usually start by making an effort to organise. This company shall make this film plus a certain number of others, another company shall make such and such. It is all very fair and very just and entirely crazy. For having apportioned their films they sit back and wait results. They do not take into account the fact that some of the films may be in preparation for weeks, some may get bogged in inter-Ministerial arguments and some languish and die because nobody is interested. On paper a film unit may be fully occupied, in reality the entire unit may be

doing nothing, while two script writers wrestle with innumerable official problems.

One of the most frequent causes of delay is due to the fact that the film-makers, who have no official status, are often left to do jobs which should be done by the Ministry. This often suggests lack of co-ordination between the Ministry of Information and the particular Ministry concerned with the film in hand. That the Films Division in consultation with their film-makers, should decide how the message should be turned into celluloid no one will deny, but there should surely be some agreement between the Films Division and the relevant Ministry on what that message should be. At present the film-maker shuttles to and fro between Ministries, a tiring referee in some eternal boxing match. Or again, within the Films Division itself, there is often disagreement. One person passes a script and the film is put in hand. Somebody else within the Films Division then sees the script and disagrees over certain points. Work on the film is stopped while everybody argues the toss.

A film is commissioned and work on the script started. The first draft is approved with minor alterations, the second is approved, a shooting script is prepared—everything is running smoothly. The unit is ready, the budget prepared. Then everything falls to pieces. It is discovered that other, expert, departments have heard nothing of the film at all and are perhaps rightly annoyed that they have not been consulted. They are usually in a strong enough position to hold the film up and so we go back to the beginning again with a new treatment wanted.

### An Efficiency Plan

Perhaps a film on a certain technical subject is given to a unit to make. The film is a success and obviously by the time it is shown there are two or three people in that unit who have learnt a good deal about the subject and have got to know the experts involved. The Ministry decide to have another film made on another angle of the same subject. Do they go to the unit who made the first film? Of course not. They give it to a different unit who start at the beginning and go through all the same preliminary stages again, learning the stuff from the letter A. Nobody wants to spend a life-time making films on one subject, but there is surely room for an efficiency plan here, a plan whereby it is not necessarily the same directors that make every film, but a plan that allows for the same script writers and contact makers.

There are a dozen other instances which could be cited by any film unit whereby the work in hand could be organised and made efficient, but before we leave this question, we would like to mention—very softly and quietly—the matter of the Ministry of Information Library. We are

not quite certain who is responsible for this delightful little cess-pit, whether it is the Crown Film Unit or the Films Division, but as it contains all the Films Division material, it should be their job to see that it is run properly. By now it must contain the finest and most comprehensive collection of material ever assembled. Library material is often an essential part of war propaganda films, saving as it does, time, money and labour. Often the material is unique and cannot be shot again. So rich in material is it that, in fact, it should be nearly always possible to use library shots that have never been seen before by the public.

Can anybody get a shot out of it even when instructed to do so by the Films Division? No. There are editors who but yesterday were sane and healthy and who, to-day, are gibbering lunatics, staring wide-eyed at those strips of celluloid which carry the words "Missing Scene". Editors who have made the long sad journey to Pinewood and wrestled for hours with the chaos in the library. There are cutting-copies which have grown old and dusty waiting for the one missing shot which somebody once glibly said could be got from the library. But enough of this horrible subject. We have only forced ourselves to mention it—and the mere thought is an acute pain—because we believe that to make a muddle of the everyday things is also to muddle the major issues.

And so it goes on. Many of the difficulties are of course, merely part of the inevitable hold-ups due to the war for which the films are being made, but many are just the result of plain bad planning.

Thus there is a situation in which film propaganda is being emasculated for want of a major plan, which means first of all a lack of faith, a need for a belief. On a secondary plane it is doubly difficult to make film propaganda owing to the lack of day-to-day planning by the executives of the Films Division—the two problems are we believe inter-related.

Let the Films Division have an autumn cleaning and put their house in order and then let them pause and ask themselves exactly what they are getting at. We shall be surprised if they find an immediate answer. The mere fact of considering the matter may, of course, only result in yet another carefully initialled file. We prefer to believe that they could find a solution which could be a message of faith to us all.

In the summer time the butterflies flew bravely and gave us fresh hope. Now, if they would do the same glad job in the dark winter months and bring us and our Allies, the Americans, the Russians and the Chinese, heartening messages of ourselves at war, they must plan.

Peacock and Frithillary, Red Admiral and Purple Emperor, what are you doing and where are you going?

## Spiritual Offensive

MR. BRENDAN BRACKEN recently made one of his rare public pronouncements. The Minister of Information had made a discovery about the British people. "The British" he said, "have a sort of relish for bad news. The Government were never more popular than when the news was absolutely frightening. It was when they got a victory or two that people said, 'How much longer are these old codgers going to remain in office?'"

If the British people were indeed as complacently masochistic as Mr. Bracken suggests (it is interesting that his opposite number Dr. Goebbels, put forward a similar idea during the blitz) then no one would have to bear so much of the blame as the man whose professional responsibility it is to minister to British morale. Fortunately, however, Brendan Bracken cannot be accused of turning us into passively appreciative spectators of national crises, he can only be suspected of not minding if we should become something of that kind.

### The Bracken tendency

We do not know whether the Minister of Information is interested in films. Yet even if he is quite unaware of the work of the Films Division, the fact remains that the Bracken tendency to turn a beaming eye upon warning signals appears to be influencing even this Division—the most realistically-minded of his Ministry. For the Films Division increasingly shows signs of being lost in the abstract philosophical contemplation of triumph and disaster as equally transient phenomena ("impostors", Kipling called them) which are incapable of affecting the manifold and delightfully quixotic virtues of the British people. "We British people are wonderful" they seem to say. "Quite apart from how the war is going, look how tough the people of Dover still are, look what a jolly time working-class people have when they throw a party and look what a bunch of bright boys work in the docks." For these are the main propaganda messages to be derived from *21 Miles*, *Work Party* and *Dockers*, three recent five-minuters selected at random and above average in imagination and sincerity of approach. Other films show how even the most apparently useless jobs may be part of the war effort (*Essential Jobs*), how the Army makes sure to put the right man in the right job (*The Right Man*), how pleasant it is on a troopship (*Troopship*) and how we won the Battle of Britain back in 1940 (*This Day Saved the World*). All these films have been made in the last month or two

and during the same period we have had a few films discreetly hinting at social reform—*New Towns for Old* and *Rehabilitation* for example.

What is the total propaganda effect of the foregoing list of productions? Together with a number of first-rate technical instructional films they represent a considerable proportion of the recent M.O.I. output for home distribution. Surely we can say no more for them than that they tell us (and, in some cases, our Allies too) that we are a remarkable people engaged in a variety of wonderful activities. We have our whimsical forgivable little faults of course, but for the most part we are God's gift to civilisation.

Notice also that the message of British magnificence which they carry is presented not with fire or passion but only with a humdrum self-assurance. In none of these films is there any quality which tears at the heart as would a true picture of a great people in the critical agonies of a struggle to survive.

Although in its present phase, we are losing the war, only very occasionally do we get any hint from an M.O.I. film of the great historical importance of the days through which we are passing. No attempt is made to inspire us with the grandeur of the issues. Strangely enough we can do it for other people but not for ourselves. Bad news or good news, it's all the same to us, says the Minister and his Ministry. But we can feel more deeply about China—for look at *Chiang Kai-shek Visits India*, a supremely simple and supremely moving little film.

The Films Division must show us in its propaganda what are the "vitalities", the living issues involved. The people of this country have no "relish for bad news". If they have become indifferent to news, good or bad, it is because the good news they really wish to hear, the news of a new and vital world to be won, has always been withheld from them.

But it is not only a question of viewing the war with passion. There is a demand also for reasoned films of world strategy which will take good news and bad news out of the chaotic jumble of parochial conceptions and fit them into a world pattern. Such films are the best possible antidote for jingoistic complacency.

Before the war it was widely suspected overseas that Britain was in decay. The principal symptom was a national listlessness and want of vitality. The events of 1940 began to disprove the theory, but the proof will not be complete until we have demonstrated a vitality which not only can defend us against seemingly hopeless odds but which also can take the spiritual offensive. In inspiring and articulating this national renaissance Mr. Bracken and his Films Division have a task for which they should be prepared to forsake the amused or admiring contemplation of English idiosyncrasy.

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**His Majesty's Jollies.** Production: Paramount News. Director: G. T. Cummings. Two reels. Subject: The Royal Marines. M.O.I.

*Treatment:* Everybody slips up now and again, and the better they are the harder they fall. Paramount News have the well-earned reputation of presenting first class material in a first-class way. In this film they have certainly got the material—there is one staggering pan shot across a parade ground which looks like a de Mille arena shot and some superb invasion practice stuff—but nothing much has been done to it. There is a half-hearted attempt to peg the whole thing to one young recruit but this doesn't get us very far. No character will come to life just because a few shots are taken of him at random. Probably more natural sound would have helped.

*Propaganda Value:* The film covers the ground and shows us what the Marines' job is and how they train. That's about all.

As a recruiting film it will probably do a good job. The commentary has managed to get across the idea of a select body of men with tradition and determination and a feeling of adventure. But with such a grand subject it could hardly have done otherwise.

[NOTE: We were sorry that Ian Coster was not in time for inclusion in the film. Perhaps one day he will give us the real story which this film might have told.]

**National Fire Service Mobilising Procedure.** Shell Film Unit. Director: Kay Mander. Camera: Pat Gay. Producer: E. Anstey. Two-reel training film. M.O.I.

This is an exhaustive treatment of fire-fighting organisation under blitz conditions, made with painstaking accuracy. It refuses to be side-tracked into dwelling on truly magnificent blazes shown but briefly in the film and sticks grimly to the mobilisation of pumps and appliances. Despite the background of inferno, the film gives a picture of calm, efficient organisation carried out by immaculately uniformed and closely co-operating staffs. Hell may have broken loose in London, but one has the comforting impression that reason is in process of controlling if not mastering the effects of maniacal destruction. The film carries out its job of exposition competently, and should prove to be useful for training purposes.

**C.E.M.A. Strand Film Co.** Producer: Alex Shaw. Directors: John Banting, Dylan Thomas, Charles de Lautour, Alan Osbiston, Peter Scott, Desmond Dickinson. Camera: Charles Marlborough. Two reels. M.O.I.

If this were not a non-theatrical film one would feel justified in complaining about the tedious and unattractive introduction in which Richard Butler, President of the Board of Education, outlines the purposes of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and Art. Otherwise the film is rich in picture and sound. It takes one to rehearsals, to concerts, plays and recitals, and succeeds in giving the impression that the workers of Britain are getting entertainment of a high standard in their spare time. What it omits to tell is how much of this entertainment is given and how widespread it is. It does show the use being made of available buildings, churches, canteens, etc.

In this film an experiment in production was made by utilising different directors for different episodes. As the film that follows Mr. Butler's introduction is impressionist and not explanatory, the experiment would seem to have succeeded in giving added colour and vitality.

**H.M.S. King George V.** Verity Films. Compiled by L. Laurence from material shot by Raymond Elton. One reel. M.O.I.

An account of life on the battleship with but little omitted in showing "how the wheels go round". An intelligent schoolboy would be impressed though perhaps not thrilled or inspired to join the Navy. The chief defect is that the sea plays no part in the film and the battleship seems capable of every function but that of sailing. As a result the ship does not acquire a personality and inspires no devotion or affection. However, the film gives a great deal of information and leaves one impressed by the efficiency and ingenuity displayed by shipbuilders, engineers, and by the Navy.

**Chiang Kai-shek in India.** Indian Film Unit. Director: Ezra Mir. Re-commentated for Britain. Five minutes. M.O.I.

Most has been made of the slender material available, mainly newsreel, and of a sympathetically worded commentary. The film gives some slight information about China, shows us brief pictures of the Chinese people and devotes most of its time to showing Chiang Kai-shek and his wife on their visit to India. It is a pity that more information about the objects of the visit had not been given in the commentary and that the significance of the event had not received greater emphasis.

**Worker and War Front No. 2.** Non-Theatrical. Composite production by several units. One reel. M.O.I.

This series may well turn out to be a refreshing break-away from the routine M.O.I. film. The second issue covers three or four subjects. The opening one gives a telling comparison between the great social event, the Agricultural Show of 1939, and a war-time agricultural show which is down to earth and down to business. A second item deals with the National Seamen's Union and its advantageous removal from bombed-out London premises to a country mansion and estate. A lively item is from Russia showing factory workers entertaining their fellows during leisure hours.

**Clamping Potatoes.** Realist Film Unit. Ministry of Information for Ministry of Agriculture. 8 minutes.

An instructional film for farmers. A pleasant, well-made film. The story is clearly told and the potatoes well and truly clamped.

**A New Fire Bomb.** Shell Film Unit. Director: Napier Bell. Producer: Edgar Anstey. Camera: Stanley Rodwell. 5 minutes. M.O.I.

An explanation of how to deal with the new fire bomb that contains an explosive charge. This film does its job very well indeed and leaves no doubts about the correct method of procedure.

(Continued on page 130)



# WAR-TIME FILM PLANS IN U.S.

*From an American Correspondent*

SINCE America came into the war a large number of changes have been made in the United States Government and commercial film set-up. America has been quicker to press forward with war-time film plans than England was. The war is, of course, three years older than it was when the Ministry of Information set up its Film Department and the war is at a much more critical stage.

In peace-time a number of American Government departments had their own film producing and distribution departments; for example, the Department of Agriculture maintained a Production Department which turned out a large number of films dealing with the Government's policy in agriculture, and also films explaining to farmers the new techniques of farming as they were developed in the Government's research stations.

This department ran a film library and agents round the country showed the films on 16 mm. projectors to farmer audiences. A number of other Government departments such as the Department of Commerce and the Bureau of Mines operated on a similar basis. There was, therefore, in the Government set-up a good precedent for film production and distribution.

Throughout the country State Universities and Municipal Authorities supported film libraries. Most of these operated to cover the territory of a State and the University Extension Department was the moving force.

Through these libraries and from the Government Central Libraries at Washington some 25,000 16-mm. projectors were served. But the production was piecemeal, there was little relation between the activities of one Government Department and those of another, and high standards of production were exceptional. Sometimes, however, brilliant, if sporadic, ventures produced outstanding films. We all remember the period in which Lorentz turned out such notable films as *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River*.

## British versus U.S.

On the whole, however, United States documentary compared unfavourably with British documentary. The reason for this is easily found. British documentary films were the first films to put Britain on the screen. For a long period commercial British production aped Hollywood products and there was no recognisable picture of Britain on British screens. Then came early documentary films and commanded attention not only for their high technical standard and for their interesting experiments but also for the picture of a real and recognisable Britain which they put on the screen. In the United States this curious situation did not, of course, obtain. Hollywood, in spite of its many faults and shortcomings, was always American. If the picture of America which spread over the screens of the world was not authentic it was at least recognisable. Americans learned of themselves from American films. There still remained a need for films of authentic American life, but the need was not so apparent there as it was in England.

There was not, therefore, the demand for documentary production in America and the few documentary producers did not gain wide currency for their pictures in American theatres. Only a few very outstanding American documentaries commanded theatrical distribution.

After 1939, and before America came into the war, the American production programmes, however, could not neglect the war. While America was not a belligerent the catastrophe which spread itself across three continents began to provide America with its story material and all America's films had to face up to the war.

The films produced by U.S. Government Departments began to be coloured by the war. United States agriculture was no longer a matter of domestic concern. The United States was beginning to look to the problem of feeding a starving Europe and beginning to gear itself to meet the period of reconstruction. Lease-Lend meant that the American armament industry was beginning to operate on a war-time scale although America herself was not a belligerent. Films about agriculture became war films before America was in the war. Films about industry became war films too.

At this time the film field in America was still unco-ordinated. The existing departments continued to produce their programmes as in peace-time, although their subject matter became more warlike.

The Office of Emergency Management began to produce films describing America's non-belligerent participation in the war, but the film unit operating from this office had no relations with the existing peace-time Government units.

The Office of the Co-ordinator for Inter-American Affairs, which concerns itself with the relations between the United States and the Latin American Republics was pressing ahead with a programme of cultural films to promote understanding and sympathy for the United States in Latin America, and for the South American Republics in the United States. This programme involved the production and distribution of films in both the U.S.A. and South America.

The State Department (America's Foreign Office) were anxious to promote the despatch abroad to Great Britain of any films which would help people here to understand what was going on in America. This was more a gesture of good-will than a piece of actual co-operation because a regular flow of films was not yet available.

Here and there independent sponsors made films, sometimes about their organisations and sometimes about life in America. These were of varying quality and remained independent productions unco-ordinated with the Government's activities. Here and there independent documentary producers were raking together the handful of dollars which would enable them to make a one-reeler according to their own preferences.

This was the situation in America until the summer of this year; a considerable activity, unrelated, competing and not very productive.

In the summer of this year, by an executive order of the President, a new Office was created. This was, in fact, America's Ministry of Information—the Office of War Information. Radio Commentator and ex-journalist Elmer Davis became its chief. He is responsible for all information services at home and abroad with the exception of the Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs which continues its cultural activities as before. (The work of this office was fully described in the last issue of D.N.L.) Under Davis there is a Film Bureau. Director of this is Lowell Mellett and the Chief of Production is Sam Spewack. Mellett has his representative in Hollywood, Arthur Poynter. Facing this official department stands the War Activities Committee representing the Industry. Mellett, in collaboration with the War Activities Committee, can arrange for the production and for the distribution of information films. This is done in two ways. At the Hollywood end the commercial shorts producers have pledged themselves to produce at least 26 short films per year. These will be in place of part of Hollywood's normal shorts output and will be distributed through the existing channels for shorts distribution. The subjects will be proposed to the War Activities Committee at Hollywood by Mellett's representative there. They will be financed by the industry and distributed in the usual manner. O.W.I. through their own film unit will produce twenty-six information films, and these will be distributed through the War Activities Committee on a free basis. Fourteen thousand motion picture houses have pledged themselves to show these films. This means in round terms that the O.W.I. will be responsible for a film each week in the cinemas of America.

## History of the War

Outstanding among Mellett's theatrical releases is *The World at War*, a seven-reel news reel compilation edited by Sam Spewack, who wrote the narration. This is a history of the war since Japan fired the first shots into China. The film is outstanding for its brilliant editing and clever cutting. Nearly all the material is, in fact familiar to regular cinemagoers, but the careful choice of shots and the brilliant commentary gives the film pace and a new freshness.

Mellett's Film Bureau will be primarily concerned with the production of films for the United States and their release there. Another department will be responsible for films about America going overseas. This Bureau is headed by playwright Robert Sherwood and his film officer is Robert Riskin who recently studied the Ministry of Information's work at London.

In practice, Riskin will work in close collaboration with Mellett and it is probable that most of his films for overseas will be re-edited versions of the films which Mellett prepares for the United States. There is, however, a growing realisation that films must be specially produced for overseas and that in Great Britain, for example, there is a growing demand for films which will describe the life and character of the United States.

Official visitors from Britain's Ministry of Information have made it clear to the United States Government that Hollywood has not given a full enough picture of life in the United States and that in England there is as much ignorance of American life as there is in America of the life of England. That this problem is of

first importance is realised on both sides of the Atlantic, and now with the intermingling of Americans with the English population a clearer picture of their background and of their customs is necessary. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Sherwood-Riskin Office will secure the production of films specially designed to give the English people a fundamental understanding of the American people.

The Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs continues to work independently of the O.W.I. Already a series of films dealing with South American Republics is being released non-theatrically in the United States and films on America are beginning to percolate into the Latin American Republics. Nelson Rockefeller is the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs and his film plans are in the hands of Kenneth MacGowan and Philip Dunn.

The film programmes of the Services remain independent. As in England a fairly clear distinction is made between films for the Services and films for the general public. While O.W.I. chief Elmer Davis is given the right to control all film policy, in practice the Services go their own way.

Hollywood names head the Army's film departments. Lt.-Col. Darryl Zanuck is in charge of all training films and Major Capra looks after morale films. Major William Wyler is in charge of U.S. Army Air Corps films.

Out on the wing is the little talked of Office of Strategic Services which reports and advises the President on strategy. Commander John Ford is in charge of films in this section and has already shot thousands of feet of operational and strategic material.

Out of Ford's material shot at the Battle of Midway Island has been made an 18-minute short which is being released in America through O.W.I. It has now been received in this country and will shortly be seen on British screens.

This film is particularly interesting as it is the product of a little developed technique; 16-mm. cameras shooting on Kodachrome were used and Technicolor 35-mm. prints were made by enlargement. The film was then cut and scored and issued to the theatres in its 35-mm. form. This is, of course, a process which cannot be carried out in England at the moment. English laboratories are not equipped to enlarge 16-mm Kodachrome. The results are not only interesting but quite spectacular as first class photographic material is achieved by this enlarging process.

#### New Strategy

Now that the American Government have introduced the element of order into what was chaotic the next problem is the working out of a new strategy of film propaganda. Already, departments which had been working independently, for example, the Office of Civilian Defence, are being brought into line and made part of one film effort.

The next problem is to secure international strategy in film work. In this respect the U.S. occupies a key position. It is a hemispheric centre. To the north lies the vigorous National Film Board of Canada with a domestic and foreign plan. To the south lie Latin American Republics with a rapidly developing organisation of exchange with the U.S.

New York is the practical headquarters of the O.W.I.'s Film Bureau, and at New York also is the British Information Services.

The British Film Service which here operated on a limited front has now been re-organised. Mr. George Archibald is to take over the

direction of this important service and will have under him departments dealing with the theatrical distribution of British Government films in America and with the non-theatrical distribution of the Ministry of Information's films. A British Film Library, already established at New York, is in the process of de-centralisation to Washington, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Various M.O.I. officials have recently visited the United States and it is believed that a programme of collaboration with the United States Government has been worked out.

Apart from the desirability that authentic pictures describing life in Great Britain should be available to a wide American public, either theatrically or non-theatrically, there is the constant need to show America that Great Britain is a worthy ally. Deeper than this lies the problem of sustaining a sound Anglo-American relation based on a knowledge that both democracies are facing the same way and that both countries have the same standards of decency and the same objects of endeavour.

#### Planned Production

That the Anglo-American relation, or more properly, the United Nations relation, should be properly sustained it is clear that a more all-embracing plan of strategy should now operate in the interests of economy of material, men and effort.

Production must be planned.

Canada and the United States will both want the same kind of material from the war fronts. London will be the advance post from which operational units can work and the onus will be on the M.O.I. to see that operational material goes to America.

From the United States and from Canada will come the stories of the United Nations reserves of food and materials. Only by collaboration with New York can this material find its way into the films which Britain will see. At the moment the affairs of Latin America are tied into the Inter-American relation. Collaboration at New York must see that these come into the wider perspective of the United Nations' front and that material used to explain the South American Republics to America is made available to explain them to the wider world on this side of the Atlantic.

Collaboration must yield planned production, and in view of the necessity to conserve film material, that collaboration must also achieve planned release. Nations fighting on the battlefields for their existence must not fight each other for screen space.

O.W.I., through its War Activities Committee, must be the channel to American screens and the M.O.I., through its distribution departments, will be the channel to British screens. The controllers of these channels must collaborate not in the interest of economy but in the interests of a planned and effective United Nations' information service.

Already Great Britain and Canada are providing material to the War Film Library in Hollywood. This is organised and operated by the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences in order that Hollywood film producers and writers can have authentic material at their disposal for study, for re-enactment and for incorporation in their films.

It is to be hoped that this joint effort is an earnest of further close and practical collaboration.

# AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY FILMS

ARE REPORTED IN

## FILM NEWS

NEWS of DOCUMENTARY  
AND  
EDUCATIONAL MOTION  
PICTURES

A PUBLICATION of

## The American Film Center

45 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA  
NEW YORK

TEN ISSUES A YEAR—

FIVE SHILLINGS

Place your subscription orders with

FILM CENTRE LTD.

34 SOHO SQUARE  
LONDON, W.1  
ENGLAND

# FILM OF THE MONTH

## *The First of the Few*

**F**IRST of the Few begins and ends with superb flying sequences covering the Battle of Britain. Produced and directed by Leslie Howard, it is a story with all the elements of documentary, about the Spitfire and the man who designed it. The documentary film maker would have made the Spitfire the centre and hero of his picture. *First of the Few* has as its hero R. J. Mitchell, the aeroplane's designer, and the aeroplane itself plays a secondary though important part. The interest and appeal of the picture mainly rely therefore on the human figure.

Leslie Howard plays the part of Mitchell and he acts with customary charm and restraint. The portrayal colours the whole film with this "charm and restraint" and as a result *First of the Few* is much less exciting than it should be considering the quality and dramatic opportunities of the story, and considering also the amount of highly skilled craftsmanship that has gone into the making. Leslie Howard is a good and popular actor and his face and acting are by now well known to British audiences. Perhaps it is this very familiarity that deprives Howard's Mitchell of real character and power. Perhaps it is Leslie Howard himself.

If the designer were a genius, Howard's performance shows little sign of the strong and colourful personality that goes with genius.

The film sets out to tell a real-life story and it is clear that those who made it carried out the job with all sincerity. Their sincerity, however,

did not carry them far enough. In the sense that the film is documentary and propaganda they have failed on certain important points. They have failed, for instance, in clarifying their attitude to the politics of a time that is in vivid memory of most. Politics enter into the film with the refusal of the pre-war government to sanction more money to carry on research on the Spitfire, and again they enter with Lady Houston who appears in a strange interlude backed by her slogan "Wake Up England". It was Lady Houston who provided the money, but the film is content with treating her as fairy godmother without further examination of her political activities. The politics of the time cause Mitchell to expend a great deal of unnecessary time and energy in combating indifference, but in spite of the important part this plays in his life, no clear picture is given of pre-war politics and no definite line is taken. This is a loss to the film and one that is not likely to be overlooked by audiences who are a good deal more politically conscious than they used to be.

There are other defects which could be overlooked in a less important and less realistic film. One is in the emphasis on the Spitfire as the aeroplane that saved Britain. But surely Hurricanes shared in the Battle of Britain!

Another defect is in neglecting to give full details of the designing and building of the aeroplane. The chain that holds the film together is the building and perfecting of the fighter. The

audience's interest is aroused from the start by reference to technical details, but for the most part, the film fails to explain technicalities that even the layman can now in war-time understand. In addition, the film never clears up a cause of the mysterious crash that occurs during the trial in America.

The turning points of the film is when Mitchell visits Germany and discovers how far advanced the Germans are in aeronautics. This section of the film is well handled. From conversations with Germans (who are made to appear rational human beings) Mitchell is convinced about the inevitability of the war and sees that his job is to produce a fighter that can beat all others. Aware of the extreme urgency, Mitchell overworks on the Spitfire and manages to complete it before his death. From the sacrifice of his life for this purpose the film receives its title.

Despite its shortcomings *First of the Few* has many good points. It is also a smooth, highly-polished job of work with possibly greater propaganda value abroad than it will have here.

## RADIO

**T**HE growing interchange of productions between Britain and the United States is certainly bringing some liveliness on to our local ether. Corwin's series of six programmes under the title of *A Yank in England* was fine stuff. He is a producer from the Columbia Broadcasting System and came over to do the programmes on the spot—the job being to interpret Anglo-U.S. relationships from the angle of the influx of U.S. troops into this country. Corwin is a producer who really belongs to radio, and there must be few others who can use his impudent technique and get away with it—at any rate without muddling the listener. Although designed for U.S. audiences the productions were well worth putting into English programmes. Corwin was intelligent, by the way, in his choice of commentator (Ed. Murrow) and composer (Benjamin Britten). A further series is possibly being planned.

Meantime, from the other end our ex-patriot Alistair Cooke has been working on a series called *Cooke at War* in the B.B.C. New York Studios. The best so far has been *Indiana Arsenal*, the story of a small town of 800 inhabitants which becomes the site for the biggest dry-powder munitions works in the world. Population now 20,000. Cooke uses an impressionist technique which isn't always free of artiness and sentimentality but which may have the advantage of giving English listeners a good sense of atmosphere. The most important thing about Cooke's work is, however, his ingenuity in presenting us with a sense of the varied regions and peoples of the U.S.A.—even the untutored English ear, for instance, must have noticed with interest the great variations of dialect in the boom scenes of *Indiana Arsenal*.

It is reported from U.S. and Canada that the B.B.C. has done a marvellous job of capturing the short wave-lengths. The British programmes, it is said, are by far the easiest to get in contrast to the German and Japanese. A common grouse however, against the B.B.C. is their persistence in putting out music when reception conditions are bad. Most people would prefer a switch to something spoken under such circumstances—you can always get something out of the talking voice even when atmospherics are being a nuisance.

## ★ For your information

**I**N every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**Kinematograph  
WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2

# CANADIAN FILM BOARD AT WORK

STANDING fairly high up on the banks of the Ottawa River and thereby considerably open to sun, sky, and a pretty good hunk of Quebec scenery opposite, the National Film Board is a largeish ugly building. Across the road, with sublime inappropriateness, lies the best piece of architecture in Ottawa—the Embassy of Vichy France. There are a lot of swallows, the tugs tow the huge lumber-rafts downstream, and the Film Board building never closes, or at any rate not till very late at night.

It used to be the old Canadian Government Picture Bureau, but since those days it has been enlarged and re-equipped. There are two projection theatres, one of which is also a recording and dubbing studio as well as being large enough for minor sets. The labs have just been overhauled and new machinery installed. There is a big stills department. And rows of cutting rooms, camera rooms, stock rooms; and lots of offices full of people writing scripts and commentaries, wrestling with financial schedules and location accounts. A busy joint, in fact; for it houses virtually the whole Canadian production set-up, and of the 250 men and women employed by the Board some 190 work at these headquarters.

Most of them are Canadians, learning their job in very much the same tough way as the British documentary people did in the 'thirties. But amongst them you find, in addition to the Films Commissioner himself, a few figures

known well to us in England—Stuart Legg, Stanley Hawes, Raymond Spottiswood, John Ferno, Joris Ivens, Irving Jacoby, Norman MacLaren.

Two theatrical two-reelers every month, two newsreels trailers a week, cartoon and diagram films, training and instructional films for the Services, all sorts of non-theatricals, including a special series on 16 mm. Kodachrome—the production schedule is big for a young organisation and impressive in relation to a country bigger in area than the United States but with a population of only 12½ million. Add to this the fact that the Board undertakes the organisation of its non-theatrical distribution, has a special department making French versions for Quebec, and has a number of people keeping tabs on things right across Canada as well as in Washington and New York, and it is not surprising that the N.F.B. goes on expanding and is looking for larger premises.

By its constitution, the Film Board has more direct power probably than any other film-propaganda organisation among the United Nations. It is in effect a Government Department with statutory powers.

Actual production differs from England in that the entire set-up is centralised and there are virtually no outside units working to contract (Disney's productions for the Board are an obvious exception). Within the central body, however, departmentalisation has been carried out in terms of production units. There are a series of Directors of Productions, corresponding to our producers, each of whom is responsible for films turned out by the units. Each unit has an Assistant Director of Production (our Director) who is responsible for his own films and in charge of the unit. Into the units are absorbed the cameramen, editors, writers, research workers, etc.

The system is organised to give each individual the maximum amount of responsibility. There is, too, a good deal of specialisation, the various units concentrating on their own particular type of job.

On top of all this there are a number of Supervisors, each being in charge of a department—e.g. Laboratories, Sound, Stills, Non-theatrical distribution, Projection, and so on.

The whole set-up actually works very well. Films are turned out to schedule; and the unit system makes for fluidity, and ability to re-organise internally with the minimum of disturbance. Continual expansion is also possible without muddle.

The Board stands in high repute with the Film Trade and also with other Government Departments. In other words it gets distribution and it gets production facilities. Neither of these would be possible if its production policy and its box office results did not make the grade.

Quite a high percentage of women are working on the creative production side and they look like being a big success. The only person lacking from this set-up is Evelyn Spice, who has not yet been tempted back from the wheatlands of the West by the pungent aroma of Ottawa celluloid.

Taking it by and large, you could say, to those who remember Blackheath, that the National Film Board is like Blackheath multiplied by five, fully equipped, and working one hundred per cent to schedule on an enormous production programme. The place feels good. The people are purposeful and not arty, and they know how to work. And they are not only making the documentary idea an integral part of Canadian life but also helping to push it forward towards new and lively international perspectives.

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR,

Sir,

My weekly filmgoing is mainly done at Bromley. We have two supers there, the Gaumont and the Odeon. Both these large circuit houses, but particularly the Odeon, have been regular and staunch supporters of advertising films and there is very seldom a week when we are not roused to jeers and boos by these disgusting shorts. On the other hand, no doubt because these advertising shorts occupied so much of their programme, our two houses used, until a few weeks ago, to show us practically no Ministry Five-Minuters—I doubt whether they showed them more often than one week in ten. Recently, I am happy to say, they have taken to showing the five-minuters regularly, but they still support those horrid little advertising films and this week (August 24-29) this has had a particularly nasty result. Both the Odeon and the Gaumont are showing a horror called *A Sweet Story* advertising Mars bars and Maltesers, which has wasted the time of the technicians at Merton Park Studios and Technicolor and a lot of valuable film stock and other materials which we can ill afford to lose. Now the feature at the Gaumont is *Uncensored*, in which the British Film Industry has made a sincere attempt to give a true and inspiring picture of the fight of Belgian patriots against the Nazis. But *Uncensored* immediately follows *A Sweet Story*, and the two actors taking the parts in the first few minutes of the film, of a priest being dragged off to gaol by the Nazis and a newspaper editor heroically refusing to co-operate with them, are the very men we have just seen on the screen as a whimsical shop-keeper and helpful factory manager, trying to sell us Mars bars. The result of course is fatal to *Uncensored*; the audience bursts into comment and jeers, and the hope of any useful effect from *Uncensored* is ruined. This is a pretty comment on our film business; it shows how they are perfectly prepared to sabotage such puny war effort as they are making. If people haven't the decency to give up making and showing advertising films of their own accord, they should be stopped at once, and a man like Anthony Asquith should have more sense than to ruin a would-be moving realistic film by the use of typed and stagey actors.

A Correspondent

## SIGHT and SOUND

### Autumn Issue

6d.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,  
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1



## Film Societies

### Manchester and Salford

Together the Manchester and Salford Film Society and the Manchester and District Film Institute Society have made arrangements for a Czech-French film display on October 4th, in association with the Czechoslovak Centre and Fighting French movements in Manchester. They will show *Judas Was a Woman* (La Bête Humaine) and Czechoslovak shorts.

Film displays for the autumn session will be at the Rivoli Cinema on October 18th, November 15th and December 13th.

The Annual General Meeting of the Manchester and Salford Film Society will take place early in October.

Mr. Maddison, recently honorary secretary of the Film Institute Society, has left Manchester on taking up another appointment, and Mr. J. H. Black has been elected in his place. Mr. E. Freidlaender is honorary treasurer.

### Ayrshire

ARRANGEMENTS are in hand for the eighth season of the Film Society of Ayrshire and the same two theatres in use last year have been re-engaged. Instead of the programme being shown twice in the same day, the same programme will be shown at Ayr and Kilmarnock on consecutive Sunday evenings. This alteration has been made to obviate travelling and also to cater for men and women engaged in the war effort.

For the opening programme the Council has selected films to build upon the subject of "Man the Enigma". Raymond Massey's study of Abraham Lincoln, *The Spirit of the People*, will be shown, supported by *Man the Enigma* (Pathé), *The 13th Instant* (Kinograph) and the Ministry of Information *Blood Transfusion*. *The Common Touch* or *Gaslight*, *Chico*, *Western Isles* and *Arabian Bazaar* will make up the second programme.

The third programme on the subject "Cartoon" will include George Pal's *Love on the Range*, *How a Cartoon is Made* and *Transfer of Power*, while the fourth programme will be a continental double-feature with *Fredlos* and *Merlusse*. The fifth will have *The Rich Bride* and supporting travel and scientific films, and the Christmas programme will consist of Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* and *Early One Morning*.

(New Documentary Films Continued)

**We Speak to India.** Everyman Films. Director: Richard Massingham. Associate Producer: Alex Shaw. Camera: Alex Strasser. Commentator: Z. Bokhari. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

It is easy to forget with all the present absorption in the unpleasant aspects of Indian politics that Indians are giving direct and valuable help to us here in Britain. The film isolates a few Indians and shows the work they are doing here and it pays due to the 40,000 Indian seamen in the Merchant Service and to the men of the Indian Army units at present in training in England. There is a pleasant sequence in a London tube shelter in which an Indian girl student works on her thesis while bombs fall. The film is made with feeling and sympathy, and it should prove of useful propaganda value.



## THE UNIT BEHIND THIS SYMBOL

### PRODUCERS

Donald Taylor

Alexander Shaw

### DIRECTORS

Ralph Bond  
John Eldridge  
Peter Scott

Charles de Latour  
Alan Osbiston

Ivan Moffatt  
John Banting  
J. Fraser Foulsham

### SCRIPT WRITERS

Reg Groves

Dylan Thomas

Diana King

### CAMERA DEPARTMENT

Jo Jago  
Cyril Arapoff

Charles Marlborough

J. Burgoyne-Johnson  
John Havinden

### CUTTING ROOM

Alan Osbiston (in charge)  
Oswald Hafeurichter  
Leslie Pohler

Lyla Cranston  
Judith Craig  
John Vernon

Edith Barbeck  
Connie Mason  
Mrs. Pugh (Library)

### PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Studio  
Hal Wilson

London  
Peter Price

Location  
Gus Charpentier

### PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Fred Brown

E. Whitehall

D. Ryan

### PRESS

Ronald Strode

## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

Offices: 1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

Tel.: GERRARD 6304/5.

Studios: NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

Tel.: ELSTREE 1644.

## To Instructional Film-Makers

It is probably vanity which is responsible for the complete failure of many of the instructional films at present being turned out. Film technicians are tending to forget one of the essentials of good craftsmanship and that is, that a job, however technically brilliant, is useless unless it achieves its purpose. Mr. William Wyler, when he makes a film, not only succeeds in his first purpose, which is to entertain, but also achieves each of his effects in that film with deadly accuracy. Every movement, every gesture, every line of dialogue makes its point clearly, concisely and dramatically. This certainty of touch is surely the hallmark of a great director. The apparent simplicity with which it is done makes immense skill and knowledge. And if you don't think William Wyler is a great director substitute anybody, from Pudovkin to Preston Sturges, whom you think is first class.

Mr. X, a film technician, finds that his war job is the making of instructional films. The films he has to work on, either as director or editor or script writer, or in any other capacity, may deal with any subject from health problems to camouflaging lorries in the snow. All the films will have one thing in common, that they have to instruct a large number of people in how the job is done. If they fail to do this, then they are useless as films and Mr. X is a bad technician and a man without any integrity. Judging by many of the instructional films which we have recently seen Mr. X and his fellow-workers are very often both these things. In fact Mr. X is trying to achieve the studio directors' effects without stopping to consider how that effect is achieved.

The films are often well made, they are frequently amusing and entertaining, but far, far too often they teach absolutely nothing. Frequently indeed they make matters worse by

confusing what knowledge the audience may already possess on that subject.

There are two reasons for this failure. One we have mentioned already, the ill-judged vanity of Mr. X. In this third year of war, far too many film makers still cling to their old, sentimental notions about the "Big Time". They still want to see their names in lights or on the credit titles accompanied by suitable orchestral chords. They want their work to send peals of laughter or wracking sobs through vast audiences. They tend to despise the film about health or the film about camouflage. This was not serious in peace time. There were enough people who thought it worth while learning how to dramatise social problems to supply the demand for films about health. But war has brought a greatly increased demand for instructional films and all kinds of film makers are now trying to dramatise subjects in which they are not at all interested. Their minds are still in the Odeons and the Majestics and the most they can do is to apply the old methods to these new problems. They find the new subjects dull so they take them into the studios and sprinkle a few actors around. They find them slow so they speed them up into a series of meaningless flashes by quick cutting. It would almost appear that there is a modern Mrs. Becton around in some film units: "Take two tanks and smash them, gather a handful of factory workers and mix in, season with a brigadier-general (if a Minister is not in season), put the whole in fifty tins and leave in the cutting room for two years. Dust before showing."

The second reason for the failure of so many instructional films is perhaps more irritating. The heads of all film producing units, whether under direct government control or not, eventually have to show their work to Superior Beings, festooned either with red tabs or with red tape.

These creatures still look upon going to the films as something one does after dinner but only occasionally, and even then it's not quite the thing unless it is a good leg show or "that girl Myrna Loy". We would suggest that many shortcomings of the instructional film are due to the desperate desire of producers to please these jolly gentlemen when they visit their projection rooms. Whether Private Brown or Mrs. Jones know any better how to cope with their daily problems after seeing the film is quite unimportant so long as Authority is amused. If a trip to the studios for a smell of the grease paint can be fitted in so much the better. The studio is a new toy which still dazzles.

Thus we have a situation in which producer and film maker work together to the same wrong ends, both forgetting what their war job is. We think that the only way out of the muddle is to suggest that everybody engaged on this work looks upon each film as a test, and an extremely exacting test too, of his capabilities as a film maker. Because we believe that instructional films during this war can be of the greatest importance. Never before has there been a time when there has been such a great demand for accurate, intelligible and well-presented information and instruction. Everybody in their daily lives has been presented with new problems on the solution of which depends their well-being, their peace of mind and ultimately their destiny. The supplying of the answers to these problems is a job of vital importance and those who do it well, can feel that they have done something of extreme value as well as a job which is of as much service as the work of the best studio director.

In conclusion we would like to point out that we are not unaware of the excellent work done in this field by various units and individuals. Their work already receives tributes in many places. But there are still many who cheat and dilly-dally. To them these remarks are addressed.



PARK STUDIO  
PUTNEY PARK LANE  
S.W. 15. PUTNEY 6274.

Managing Director:  
ANDREW BUCHANAN

## SHORTS BOOKINGS

September-October

(The following shorts bookings are selected from a list covering its members supplied by the News & Specialised Theatres Association.)

	Week commencing
<b>A Modern Miracle</b>	
The Tatler, Manchester	Sept. 27th
<b>Alaska Tour</b>	
The News Theatre, Manchester	20th
<b>At a Country Fair</b>	
The News Theatre, Birmingham	Oct. 11th
The News Theatre, Leeds	5th
<b>Cairo</b>	
Eros Theatre, W.1	Sept. 27th
<b>Dartmouth</b>	
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	20th
<b>Delhi</b>	
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	27th
The Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	27th
The Classic, Hammersmith, W.6	Oct. 4th
The Classic, Hendon, N.W.4	4th
<b>Desert Ghost</b>	
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle	Sept. 27th
<b>Exploring Space</b>	
The World's News Theatre, W.2	Oct. 11th
<b>Flashing Blades</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	4th
<b>Friend of Man</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	27th
<b>From Nuts to Scrap</b>	
The News Theatre, Manchester	Oct. 4th
<b>Great American Divide</b>	
News Theatre, Bristol	Sept. 20th
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Oct. 11th
<b>Heroes of the Atlantic</b>	
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle	Sept. 20th
<b>Highway of Friendship</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	27th
<b>H.M. Motor Launches</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	20th
The News Theatre, Leeds	28th
<b>How Goes Chile</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	20th
<b>Indian Durbar</b>	
The Classic Cinema, Portsmouth	Oct. 4th
<b>In the Box</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	11th
<b>Land of the Incas</b>	
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Sept. 20th
<b>London Before the Blitz</b>	
Embassy, Notting Hill Gate	Oct. 11th
<b>Main Street on the march</b>	
News Theatre, Leeds	Sept. 12th
<b>March of Time No. 2-8th Year</b>	
The Classic, S.W.17	27th
The Vogue Cinema, S.W.17	27th
The Classic, Hendon, N.W.11	27th
The Classic, Southampton	27th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	Oct. 11th
<b>March of Time No. 3-8th Year</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	4th
The Tatler, Manchester	4th
The Tatler, Chester	5th
The Tatler, Leeds	5th
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool	4th
The News Theatre, Leeds	5th
<b>Micky's Birthday Party</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	11th
<b>Modern Miracle</b>	
The Tatler, Birmingham	Sept. 27th
<b>Native Artisans</b>	
The Tatler, Chester	5th
<b>Nice Work if You Can do it</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	4th
<b>Night Shift</b>	
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	4th
<b>Peoples of Canada</b>	
The News Theatre, Bristol	11th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	Sept. 27th
The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne	27th
The World's News Theatre, W.2	Oct. 4th
<b>Points of View No. 7</b>	
Victoria Street News Theatre, S.W.1	Sept. 20th
The Classic Theatre, S.W.17	Oct. 11th
The Classic, South Croydon	4th
<b>Points of View No. 8</b>	
Waterloo Station News Theatre, S.E.1	Sept. 20th
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle	11th
<b>This Fowl Business</b>	
The Classic, S.W.17	Oct. 11th

## FEATURE REVIVALS

<b>Back Street</b>	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Sept. 21st
<b>Four Feathers</b>	
The Tatler, Chester	28th
<b>Major Barbara</b>	
The Classic, Southampton	20th
The Tatler, Leeds	Oct. 12th
<b>Nothing Sacred</b>	
The Tatler, Chester	12th

No. 6

# THE CAMEL AND THE FLY

R F U

A FLY, chancing to sit on the back of a camel who was going along weighed down with heavy burdens, was quite delighted with himself, as he appeared to be so much higher. After they made a long journey, they came together in the evening to the stable. The fly immediately exclaimed, skipping lightly to the ground: "See, I have got down directly, that I may not weary you longer, so weighted as you are." The camel replied: "I thank you; but neither when you were on me did I find myself oppressed by your weight, nor do I feel myself at all lightened now you have dismounted."

**MORAL:** *Wear your hobnailed boots if you would make your presence felt.*

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W.1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

OCT, 1942

## CONTENTS

PROBLEMS OF PROPAGANDA	133
The M.O.I. Film Catalogue	135-142
FILM OF THE MONTH	143

*In response to many requests, especially from overseas, we publish in this issue an up-to-date list of films in the M.O.I. film catalogue. This list has not appeared elsewhere and we believe it to be of considerable importance.*

VOL 3 NO. 10

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## PROBLEMS OF PROPAGANDA

THE awkward situation into which the propagandist may find himself flung is only too clearly exemplified at the moment as regards the relations between Great Britain and two of her co-partners in the United Nations battle against the Axis—the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

Propaganda must always be based on the actual and factual situation which is in operation at the moment. Truth in propaganda rests on this physical fact and cannot depend on a sense of local justice or local rightness of opinion in the abstract sense. Recently British propaganda has had to face this bitter fact.

Take first the Indian situation. As propagandists as well as film makers we must say emphatically that if the Prime Minister, for reasons of national policy or otherwise, is impelled to make to Parliament the speech which he did make about India in September, the whole propaganda machine should have been informed of the gist of this speech at least one week beforehand. Why? Because whether the Prime Minister, Mr. Amery, Mr. Cripps, Mr. Attlee and Uncle Tom Conservative Central Office and all are right or wrong, what the Prime Minister said was in itself liable to be a disastrous blow to British prestige in the United States. In other words, here is a known fact which must be faced—the fact that American opinion has, for many years, been strongly critical of our attitude towards the Indian problem. We say FACT advisedly, because we are not primarily concerned with which side is right or wrong. As propagandists we are concerned with the fact. The situation is such that a statement like the Prime Minister's was bound to add fuel to the fire of American critical opinion (already fanned by the re-introduction of the Whipping Act in India last August). That is why the propagandists should have had a week to prepare their American campaign, on the basis of what the Prime Minister was going to say.

There was, at the least, a slender case to be

made out, but no propagandist could even do this without being warned beforehand that despite the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, this country still intended, through its national spokesman, to stick to an attitude which many citizens of the United Nations regard as not merely an example of Victorian insularity, but also a slap in the face to themselves.

What is the propagandist to do under these circumstances? He is, despite any protestations he may make, involved in immediate politics; and he knows how powerful a weapon he could wield were the Government he serves to come into line with the new and revolutionary attitude of ordinary people throughout the world. Had, for instance, the Prime Minister made a speech in which he appealed to all the United Nations to hold a conference, of which the British Government would be a member and at which a joint guarantee would have been made to India in regard to immediate and post-war policy, a direct and sincere propaganda blow would have been struck before even the propagandists went into action. He would incidentally have removed at one stroke much of the critical attitude in, say, the U.S.A., by involving the critics directly in the problem itself.

We have no doubt that Mr. Churchill believes that his Government's attitude to India is essentially correct. That belief no thinking person can question. We are certain that his belief in this makes him feel that any further propaganda on the matter is unnecessary. The brute fact, however, is that thinking people in many countries, including most notably the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and China, are likely to disagree with Mr. Churchill's policy. The propagandists' dilemma therefore is obvious.

During the past year it has become more and more clear that the neglect of propaganda as a basic weapon by the British Government has led to a failure on the part of

the Government to understand the immediate needs of British policy as regards the tactics and strategy of the winning of the war.

Propaganda cannot be a tassel on the end of a Governmental bell-rope. Propaganda is part and parcel of national policy or it is nothing.

### Russia?

We may take another example of a more complicated nature. What propaganda can Britain do in Russia at this moment when it is clear that all Russia wants is the opening of a second front? The best propaganda would, of course, be the opening of the second front. This, for many reasons, may not be possible. But, if by the time these words appear, it has taken place, an immediate basis for top-line propaganda will automatically have been created. But if not, what next? Perhaps propaganda explaining why we cannot open a second front? This immediately is negative propaganda, and can only be made positive (other than by action) by building up a picture of the marvellous preparations that we are making and the great work we are doing in other areas of conflict.

The issue here is possibly less acute than that of India, but it represents the same problem. It is a problem which the British Government must face and face soon. They must realise that propaganda is a basic war weapon. If they realise this they will also realise that propaganda does not exist in a vacuum, but, like the movements of armies, of navies and of air forces, is part of war strategy, war tactics and war policy.

All films with propagandist intention are conceived in the darkness of this national lack of policy, and brought forth, usually by Cæsarean methods, into a world of icy facts for which (despite the faint fluff of good intention on their diminutive crania, and their ability at times to make a considerable noise) they are only too ill-prepared. This is most particularly true of the documentary film.



which, because it had already explored the propaganda field in the thirties, was bound to be largely used, and is today bearing the greater part of the brunt of the Government's propablundering.

Documentary workers have had to face up to the fact that their job is not merely to be film technicians but also to think hard and sanely about national policy and the propaganda that must (or should) arise therefrom. Indeed we believe that they are doing so. Every day there is evidence of less and less complacency and more and more discontent with the present set-up as regards British film propaganda. This discontent arises very naturally. The documentary movement is a young movement. Its workers are for the time being deferred from military and industrial service. They are bound therefore to feel very acutely any situation which appears to them to suggest that their work as film makers is of only minor value. That this view is not held by official quarters is small comfort to them.

#### Never lost faith

What they are faced with—from their own point of view—is a situation in which good ideas are daily castrated by timidity or even delay; in which mediocre ideas have lavished on them the time and money they could never deserve; in which positive results in propaganda terms are seldom if ever visible as a result of the labour and mental energies which they put into the films which they are employed by the nation to make on behalf of the nation—and of the United Nations. That they have never lost faith in their beliefs about the vital importance of visual propaganda is a tribute to their own sticking power rather than to the enlightenment of their governmental sponsors.

It is perhaps too often forgotten that many documentary film makers have entered the field since the war began. These young men and women were not around during the formative days of documentary, and they have seen little documentary work outside the demands of Governmental sponsorship under wartime conditions. To them, as they shuttle from one Government department to another, and watch the inexorable droppings of the play-safers petrify their scripts into staltastic monuments of status-quackery, there must come moments of violent questioning. In the maze and delay of wartime film-making they may begin even to question the theories to which they are working.

This questioning can only be answered by themselves. As documentary film makers they are propagandists. As propagandists they

must be sure of what they want to say and the terms in which it can most effectively be said. And as people sure of their message they must stick at nothing to put it across.

Vague and cloudy humanism alone they know not to be enough. Ideological and abstract arguments they reject. They know—or if they don't they must learn to know—the basic, active principles which alone truly activate this people's war, this world revolution, to interpret which is their duty and to carry which forward to a successful conclusion will in part be their especial privilege.

With them, in all the solemn pomposity of an editorial "we", they identify ourselves. We suggest that the whole of documentary must intensify hard-thinking about the job in hand. This involves argument as well as action; planning as well as combat.

The enormous conflict through which we are living will decide matters for or against the people in every area of the world. If it is not a people's war—if it does not become a people's war—it cannot, in any true sense, ever be won.

As propagandists, we must use the film medium not to TELL people, but to EXPRESS them. It is our job to identify ourselves with the people, and to concentrate their will into a searchlight across the world—from Pittsburg to Sydney, from Moscow to Buenos Aires, from Glasgow to Chungking.

As propagandists we must be pace-makers

in seeking out the true people's leadership and in detailing crisply and dramatically every growing-point of democratic initiative wherever it may be found.

As propagandists we must project the active revolution of our own people to all the peoples of the United Nations.

And to do all this, as propagandists, we must be absolute masters of our medium.

In all this the fight is still against those who fear the inevitable consequences of true victory, those who wittingly or unwittingly build blockhouses of inertia or busy themselves with comforting trivialities in order to forget the realities which press on them from every side.

So the problems of British propaganda in India and Russia are as much the business of the documentary worker as are the problems of the coalminers, or the under-fives, or the housewives, or the women's land army. Every subject is not merely a problem in film making, but also a problem in active propaganda and active policy. In thinking as well as decision every documentary worker must be alert and uncompromising.

If we are making films today for our National Government it is because we know, first—that films as propaganda are a vital weapon towards a United Nations victory, and second, that if victory comes it will be through Government and leadership which is an absolute and courageous expression of the people's will.

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders—and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**Kinematograph  
WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2

#### CORRECTION

Documentary reviews in the September number included a review of His Majesty's Jollies. Through an error this film was accredited to the M.O.I. We apologise. His Majesty's Jollies, produced by Paramount News, is not an M.O.I. film. Ed.

# THE M.O.I. FILM CATALOGUE

Thoughts arising from the catalogue of films produced and acquired by the Films Division from the outbreak of war to June 30th, 1942, and published in this issue by courtesy of the M.O.I.

TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY films; two hundred and nine thousand, one hundred and eighty-two feet of cut negative—equivalent to twenty-two full length features; one hundred and thirty-eight films acquired from other sources.

The quantity is impressive. What of propaganda quality? What does it amount to? Will it improve? In what direction will it develop? In what direction ought it to develop? These are big questions, but we can at any rate assess the present position, and indicate what we believe to be the line which must be followed in the future.

In the first six months of 1942 the Films Division has been responsible for 82 films. In the whole of 1941 only 89 were produced. Since there is no reason to suppose a diminution of production since June 30th, it looks as if the film output of 1942—and certainly the cut-negative footage—will at least be double that of 1941. No mean quantitative achievement, considering that there has been no increase in manpower over 1941, though a number of war trainees, including several women directors, are only now getting into their stride.

So much for quantity—what of propaganda quality? Take first the 5-minute films. Out of the first thirty-two (the series started in August, 1940) most were poor and some were contemptible. Only twelve—*Ashley Green Goes to School*, *Britain at Bay*, *Miss Grant Goes to the Door*, *The Front Line*, *Britain Can Take It*, *Neighbours under Fire*, *We've Got to Get Rid of the Rats*, *The Dawn Guard*, *War and Order*, *Northern Outpost*, *The Heart of Britain*, and *Dai Jones*—deserve any mention at all. The rest had better be forgotten. Of the most recent thirty-two, up to September 28th, nineteen\* reach a fair propaganda level, and none, not even the dingy *Workday*, falls to the level of idiocy, evasion and lack of reality represented by *A Call for Arms*, *Food for Thought*, and *Mr. Borland Thinks Again*—to take three of the first thirty-two titles at random. (We must add, however, that the most recent thirty-two 5-minute films include two National Savings Committee films, *The Owner Goes Aloft* and *Down Our Street*, not produced by the Films Division, but which the Division is apparently compelled to circulate. These reach as low a level of propaganda as any films yet issued).

The non-theatrical output shows a quantitative improvement too, and several films have recently been delivered which will bring the 1942 total well over the 1941 total of 23 films (exclusively the 1941 total amounted only to 7 films). The 1940 films were efficient but unambitious and cheap. The 1942 programme contains more ambitious productions, such as *Speed-up on Strlings*, *The Battle of Supplies*, the

telling A.F.U. production *Street Fighting*, *Spring on the Farm*, and *Night Shift*. In addition a non-theatrical film magazine, *Worker and Warfront*, designed especially for factory showing, is now in its third issue.

Instructional and training films are—rightly—on the increase, and in these the Films Division has excelled. Almost all are clear, telling and precise, and by their clarity, carry a propaganda message of more than local importance. *Fireguard*, a study of fire watching methods, has had a wide success in Canada and the U.S.A. The Ministry of Agriculture *Dig for Victory* films are a model of this type of production.

Apart from two feature length films by the Crown Film Unit which, at the time of going to press, have not been publicly shown: the vivid interview film, *Plastic Surgery*, made to accompany Sir Harold Gillies' lectures in the U.S.A.; and the solid work of the Colonial Film Unit, which is outside the scope of this article, the only other M.O.I. 1942 productions which demand attention are the "trailers". These have recently been reduced from about two minutes to about a minute and a quarter in length, and are attached to the newsreels. They are virtually pictorial slogans linked to propaganda campaigns in other media. At one time trailers were no one's baby, trivial, technically poor and lacking in punch or point. Latterly they have shown improvement.

## Films acquired

Finally there are the films acquired by the Films Division, almost all circulated through the Central Film Library, and forming one of the most catholic film collections ever assembled. Here may be found *Men of Africa*, a good U.S.A. selection, including *The City*, *Power and the Land*, and *A Child Went Forth*, and seven *March of Time* issues, a disappointingly short Army Film Unit list, a number of B.C.G.A. films, including *The Londoners*; the better British Council films; a good though not very up-to-date Canadian list; a good selection of films from India; some sensational blitz records taken by the Fire Brigades; a fair selection of films from the U.S.S.R., including *Soviet Schoolchild*; four representative Shell Film Unit films including *Aircrew*; and six productions of the National Savings Committee—a major blot on the whole collection. (As we go to press, we learn that the I.C.I. film, *The Harvest Shall Come*, has also been added.)

What do these films represent in propaganda achievement? On the credit side the Films Division can claim a high level of technique; an intimate and warm handling of people as people unmatched, in the best instances, by any country in the world; a high level of informational content (though there are some remarkable gaps, particularly a woeful absence of informative films about the armed forces and the tactical aspects of the war); and an increasing (though still lagging) sense of urgency.

To the debit side must be placed, besides the lack of tactical films about the Forces, first,

parochialism; second, a lack of planned films for overseas use; and third and most important and most serious of all, the absence of films which portray for the benefit and inspiration of the peoples of the United Nations, the positive forward-looking fighting spirit of the peoples themselves.

First, parochialism. Too many films assume that Britain is the centre of the world and London the centre of Britain. Too many imply that civilisation itself resides in our own little blitzed cabbage patch, that British bravery is, by itself, an answer to Hitler's *geopolitik*, and that British suffering is, by itself, a moral panacea division capable of overwhelming the enemy's steel and fire. This tendency to replace direct action by self pity is dangerous to the war effort, and is maddening to our allies.

The lack of planned films for overseas is reflected in the catalogue. Since the beginning of the war till June 30th, 1942, out of 240 films, only 27 had been produced "wholly or mainly for overseas use" as against 77 5-minute films, 48 non-theatricals, and 34 instructional and training films. This does not mean, of course, that only 27 films have been sent overseas—most of the others have certainly been sent as well: but it does suggest that overseas planning has, hitherto, been subordinated to home planning, though there is no reason to suppose that the planning of overseas films is being much more seriously considered.

Parochialism and lack of overseas planning can be corrected within the Films Division itself: the lack of films on the social and moral war purpose of the peoples of the free world, the lack of films which represent, not the government speaking to the people, but the people speaking through the government, reflecting their own thoughts, picturing their own social organisations, supporting their own anxieties, organising their own will to win, goes far deeper than any inhibitions from which the Film Division may suffer. It is almost incredible that, out of the whole list, there appear to be no films on the Trade Unions (the largest collective body of civilians in the country), no films on the Works Committees or Shop Stewards (a fundamentally important and new factor in industry), and no films on the Co-operative movement (the largest manufacturing and retailing movement in the world).

Yet it is clear that such films could contribute enormously to the war-effort, inspiring and welding together the people of Britain, and contributing significantly to our reputation overseas.

## Citizen Organisations

There is an almost complete absence, in fact, of films about the great and independent citizen organisations which are playing such a huge part in the war, for the films on such "safe" organisations as the W.V.S. are no answer. (Incidentally, *Youth Takes a Hand*, on the Youth Service Corps, priggish and patronising, bears unhealthy symptoms of the political outlook for which the recent Conservative report on post-war education was rightly castigated).

Why? A film propaganda drive of growing intensity is frustrated by the absence of such films?

(Continued on page 139)

\* *Land Girl*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Mobile Engineers*, *Diary of a Polish Airman*, *Builders*, *Filling the Gap*, *The Middle East*, *Bullion Site 568*, *Free French Navy*, the crude but dynamic *Five Men of Velika*, *Partners in Crime*, *New Towns for Old*, *Troopship*, *Dockers*, *Free House*, *21 Miles*, *Chang Kai Chek in India*, *A New Fire Bomb*, *The Nose Has It*.

# CATALOGUE OF FILMS, MADE AND ACQUIRED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, FROM THE OUTBREAK OF WAR TILL JUNE 30th. 1942.

Published by permission of the Ministry of Information, this catalogue supersedes all previous lists published in "D.N.I."

## NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Film titles in brackets are alternative titles of films listed elsewhere in the catalogue.

Names of producers and directors in brackets do not appear on credit titles.

5-M: Five-minute film.

T: Mainly for theatrical release.

N.T.: Mainly for non-theatrical release.

I: Instructional

C.F.L.: Listed in Central Film Library

W: With Irwa.

R: Reviewed in D.N.I.

O: Sent overseas.

OO: Mainly for overseas use.

OOO: Mainly for overseas use.

## I. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES			NOTES
					T	NT	LENGTH	
A.B.C.D. of Health	CFL I O	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	J. Ellitt	—	6 42	792	
Alec-Ack	CFL 5-M O	Shell	F. Anstey	P. Baylis	4 41	6 41	790	R. Vol. II, p. 67
Aleste Fideles	OOO	Strand	R. Keene and R. Bond	Muriel Baker	—	—	1,200	Despatched overseas c. 12 41.
Action (Air Communique) Air Operations	CFL NT	Technique	J. Carr & S. Box	(H. Watt)	—	3 42	788	R. Vol. II, p. 68
Airwoman	CFL 5-M O	G.B. Screen Serv.	—	F. Searle	6 41	8 41	761	Arrangement of Target for Tonight for N.T. distribution
Alert in the East	CFL NT O	Movietone	G. Sanger	—	—	9 41	917	R. Vol. II, p. 149
All about Carrots	CFL I	Brit. Found. Piet.	—	R. Haines	—	9 41	805	Newsreel compilation. First despatched overseas 4 41
All Hands	CFL T O	Fauling	M. Balcon	J. P. Carstairs	4 40	9 40	1,032	Home T. distribution by M.G.M.
All Those in Favour	CFL OO	Paul Rotha Prod.	Paul Rotha	D. Alexander	—	1 42	2,053	With Arthur Mann, R. Vol. III, p. 4
America Moves Up	5-M	Crown	—	K. Elton	—	—	1,173	First despatched overseas 6 42
Any Old Iron	5-M	Merton Park	—	—	1 41	—	510	Compiled from Library material. Longer N.T. version titled Feed the Furnaces. Non-T. distribution 9 40
Arms from Scrap	CFL 5-M O	Movietone	—	J. Eldridge	2 42	3 42	800	Part Newsreel compilation
Ashley Green Goes to School	CFL 5-M O	Strand	A. Shaw	—	10 40	1 41	647	Assoc. Producer: A. Elton. Longer N.T. version titled Village School (1,000 ft.) R. Vol. I, x, p. 8
A-Tish-oo!	5-M	Verity	Jay Lewis	(Jay Lewis and M. Munden)	2 41	—	558	R. Vol. II, p. 89
Atlantic Chamber	CFL NT O	Crown	—	—	—	10 42	1,779	Compiled from newsreel material
Balloon Site 568	CFL 5-M O	Strand	A. Shaw	I. Moffat	4 42	9 42	789	R. Vol. III, p. 100
Bampton Shows the Way	CFL NT	Realist	P. Rotha	B. Peake	—	—	564	Home T. distribution by Newsreel Association.
Battle of the Books	CFL 5-M O	Paul Rotha Prod.	P. Rotha	J. Chambers	10 41	1 42	681	R. Vol. II, p. 207
Behind the Guns	CFL T O	Merton Park	C. Muck	M. Tully	7 40	9 40	1,881	Home T. distribution by Newsreel Association.
Big City, The	CFL NT O	Strand	A. Shaw	R. Bond	—	10 40	1,160	R. Vol. I, xii, p. 12
Birth of a Tank	CFL NT O	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	G. Gunn	—	6 42	1,111	With diagrams by the Isotope Institute. For medical audiences only. A popular N.T. version (1,766 ft.) is also available.
Blood Transfusion	CFL OO	Paul Rotha Prod.	P. Rotha	H. Nieter	—	2 42	3,401	Commentary by C. B. Fry, R. Vol. I, ix, p. 13
Britain at Bay	CFL 5-M O	Crown	—	—	8 40	10 40	650	Newsreel compilation. French and Arabic versions only. Assoc. Prod.: Basil Wright.
Britain Can Take It	CFL 5-M O	Crown	(H. Watt)	—	—	10 40	785	First despatched overseas 4 42
Britain's Youth	CFL NT O	Strand	(A. Shaw)	(I. Ellitt)	—	10 40	1,120	With Jean Gillie, Rene Ray and others
British Power	OOO	Universal	—	—	—	—	905	Newsreel compilation.
Building for Victory	CFL OO	Pathe	—	—	—	2 42	965	First despatched overseas 5 40
Bulldozers	CFL 5-M O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	P. Jackson	3 42	5 42	731	Newsreel compilation.
Call for Arms, A	5-M O	D. & P.	B. D. Hurst	B. D. Hurst	7 40	—	721	Introduced by John Hilton, R. Vol. III, p. 54
Cally Home	CFL NT O	Scottish Films	See "Winged Messengers"	S. Russell	—	7 42	951	Commentary by C. B. Fry, R. Vol. I, ix, p. 13
(Carrier Pigeons)	CFL I W	Verity	Jay Lewis	—	—	12 40	600	Newsreel compilation.
Casserole Cooking	OOO	—	—	A. Keene	—	—	1,138	First despatched overseas 4 42
Cascom Sea Diver	OOO	—	—	—	—	—	—	With Peggie Ashcroft, Gordon Harker & others
Channel Incident	5-M O	D. & P.	A. Asquith	A. Asquith	9 40	—	859	R. Vol. I, xii, p. 7
Christmas Under Fire	5-M O	Crown	(H. Watt)	(C. Hasse)	1 41	—	982	Mainly library compilation. French and Arabic versions only. Assoc. Prod.: Basil Wright.
Citizens' Advice Bureau	CFL 5-M O	G.B. Screen Serv.	L. Arliss	F. Searle	6 41	8 41	780	First despatched overseas 4 42
(Citizens' Service)	CFL NT O	See "Home Guard"	—	—	—	—	—	With Peggie Ashcroft, Gordon Harker & others
Coal Front	CFL NT O	G.B.L.	B. Woolfe	F. Searle	—	12 40	965	R. Vol. II, p. 9
Coastal Defence	CFL 5-M O	Spectator	—	I. Scott	9 41	1 42	699	Newsreel compilation. R. Vol. I, x, p. 9
Country Women, The	CFL NT O	Seven League	—	J. Page	—	1 42	1,249	Assoc. Prod.: Paul Rotha, R. Vol. III, p. 55
Crust and Crumbs	CFL I	A. & D.	A. Bryce	A. Bryce	—	10 41	530	With Hay Petrie and others
Cultivation	CFL I O	Realist	(F. Samsbury)	Margaret Thomson	—	1 42	1,094	Assoc. Prod.: Edgar Anstey
Dai Jones	CFL 5-M O	Verity	Jay Lewis	D. Birt	3 41	5 41	677	R. Vol. II, p. 67
Dangerous Comment	CFL T O	Fauling	M. Balcon	J. P. Carstairs	5 40	9 40	1,028	Home T. dist. by M.G.M. R. Vol. I, v, p. 17
Dangers in the Dark	CFL 5-M O	Public Relations	—	R. Massingham	10 41	1 42	582	R. Vol. II, p. 207
Dawn Guard, The	CFL 5-M O	Charter Films	J. Boulting	R. Boulting	1 41	3 41	893	With Percy Walsh and Bernard Miles. R. Vol. II, p. 28
Decontamination of Streets	CFL I	Verity	S. Box & J. Carr	Louise Biri	—	8 42	1,489	R. Vol. II, p. 107
Defeat Diphteria	CFL I O	Paul Rotha Prod.	P. Rotha	B. Peake	—	6 41	1,024	Partly compiled from How to Dig and Cultivation. Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey
Dig for Victory	CFL 5-M O	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	—	10 41	1 42	563	Home T. dist. by Newsreel Assoc.
Dinner at School	CFL NT O	Seven League	—	H. Nieter	—	6 42	890	With Tommy Trinder, Jean Colin and others
Ditching	CFL I O	Realist	(F. Samsbury)	Margaret Thomson	—	5 42	926	R. Vol. II, p. 107
Do it Now	I	G.P.O.	—	—	—	9 39	—	Newsreel compilation. First despatched overseas 7 41
(Drums of the Desert)	CFL I O	Strand	D. Taylor	D. Dickinson	5 41	—	602	Newsreel compilation.
Latent Out with Tommy Trinder	CFL I O	Strand	—	—	—	—	—	Home T. dist. by A.B.F.D. R. Vol. III, p. 37
Emergency Cooking Stove	CFL I O	Films of Gt. Brit.	—	A. Buchanan	—	10 41	790	Newsreel compilation. First despatched overseas 7 41
Empire Marches, An	OOO	—	—	—	—	—	—	Newsreel compilation.
Empire's New Armies	CFL OO	Pathe	—	—	—	1 42	962	Newsreel compilation.
(Feed the Furnaces)	CFL T O	Crown	See "Any Old Iron"	P. Jackson	2 41	5 42	279	Home T. dist. by A.B.F.D. R. Vol. III, p. 37
Ferry Pilot	CFL T O	Crown	—	—	—	—	—	Newsreel compilation.

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES		LENGTH	NOTES
					T	NT		
Few Ounces a Day, A Fighter Pilot	CFL 5-M O S-M O	Paul Rotha Prod. Movietone News	— G. Sanger	— —	10/41 12 40	1 42 2 41	565 701	Designed by the Isotype Inst. R. Vol. II, p. 207
Fighting Allies Fighting Fields Filling the Gap Fire Guard First Days, The Fitness for Service Five and Under Food for Thought	OO S-M NT O S-M O CFL NT OW T O W CFL NT O OOO	Movietone Realist Shell G.P.O. G.B.I. Paul Rotha Prod. Ealing	— Mary Field E. Anstey A. Cavalcanti G.B.I. P. Rotha J. Croydin	— — G. Bell — J. Warren D. Alexander A. Brand	— — 4 42 11 39 — 7 40	1 42 1 41 6 42 2 42 1 42 — —	1,065 483 256 2,115 776 1,472 510	Produced in association with Scottish Films Ltd. A. Hallas-Bitchell cartoon. R. Vol. III, p. 53 R. Vol. III, p. 21 Home T. dist. by A.B.P.C. R. Vol. I, p. 6 Delivered c. 6.41. First despatched overseas 10/41 With Mibel Constanza, Mariel George and others.
For Children Only Food from the Empire Free French Navy From the Four Corners	CFL I O CFL NT W CFL 5-M O CFL T O	Stand Merton Park Spectator D. & P.	— — M. Hankinson —	— — — —	— — 5 42 6 41	9 42 10 40 9 42 —	662 832 786 1,406	R. Vol. III, p. 55 R. Vol. I, x, p. 9 With Leslie Howard. Home T. Dist. by M.G.M. First despatched overseas 1/41 First despatched overseas 11/40
From the Seven Seas Front Line, The Furnaces of Industry Germany Calling	OOO CFL 5-M O CFL T O CFL T O	G.B.I. G.P.O. Merton Park Spectator	— — — —	— — — —	10 40 11 40 12 41	12 40 2 41 1 42	567 1,067 220	Home T. distribution by United Artists Released through the newsreels. Devoted and edited by C. Riley
Goofy Trouble Go to Blazes Health in War Heart of Britain, The	5-M O CFL 5-M W CFL NT O CFL 5-M O	D. & P. Ealing Studios G.P.O. Crown	— — — —	— — — —	12 40 5 42 11 40 2 41	9 42 9 42 1 40 4/41	671 847 1,195 921	With Will Hay, R. Vol. III, p. 70 R. Vol. I, vii, p. 9 American version titled "This is England". R. Vol. II, p. 48
Heavier than Air Hedging Her Father's Daughter	OOO CFL I O CFL 5-M	G.B.S.S. Realist Butcher's Film Service	E. Dane (F. Sainsbury) — —	— — — —	— — 12 40 2 41	— — 5 42 9 41	763 830 918	First despatched overseas 9/42 Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey With Jennifer Gray, Viola Lyel and others
Herrings He Went to the Cupboard H.M. Minslayer H.M. Navies Go to Sea Home Guard	CFL I CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O	Verity Films of G.B. Verity Movietone Strand	— — — — —	— — — — —	— — 9 41 H. Caster 5/41	12 40 1 42 6 41 7 41 5/41	600 768 736 979 728	R. Vol. I, vii, p. 7 With Joan Stern, p. 7 R. Vol. II, p. 18 Newsreel compilation. With Bernard Miles. Substantially modified & lengthened NT version titled "Citizen's Army" (9/40 f.). R. Vol. II, p. 107
Hospital Nurse How on the Spot How to Dig How to Thatch India's Navy Grows	CFL 5-M O CFL I O CFL I O CFL I O OOO	G.B.S.S. Films of G.B. Selwyn Strand Movietone News	— — — — —	— — — — —	— — — — —	1 42 10 41 1 42 1 42 —	713 1,030 1,033 594	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey, R. Vol. II, p. 191 Assoc. Prod.: Edgar Anstey Newsreel compilation. First despatched overseas 2/41 Home T. dist. by Warner's
Into the Blue Italy Beware	CFL NT O T O W	G.B.I. Paramount	— —	— —	— —	9 40 5 40	950 1,267	Newsreel compilation. Home T. dist. by Anglo-American. Identical overseas version titled "Drums of the Desert". R. Vol. I, vii, p. 7
Jane Brown Changes her Job Job to be Done, A	CFL NT O CFL NT O	Verity Shell	S. Box & J. Carr A. Elton	— —	— —	1 42 10 40	791 898	Assoc. Prod.: A. Elton. R. Vol. I, v, p. 8
Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat Kill that Rat! King's Men, The Knights of St. John Lady be Kind Land Girl Letter from Home Listen to Britain Living with Strangers London Autumn, 1941	CFL I O CFL NT O CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O CFL NT O CFL NT O CFL NT O OOO	Strand Merton Park Movietone News Strand British National P. Rotha Prod. G.P.O. Crown Realist Films of G.B.	— — — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — — —	842 779 742 644 711 747 1,493 1,685 1,108 890	Assoc. Prod.: Edgar Anstey, R. Vol. III, p. 37 Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey, R. Vol. II, p. 107 Newsreel compilation With Muriel George, R. Vol. II, p. 147 R. Vol. II, p. 21 With Celia Johnson. First despatched overseas Home T. release by British Lion (6/41) Assoc. Prod.: B. Wright, R. Vol. II, p. 149 Commentary by Sir Gilbert Scott. First despatched overseas 11/41
(London Can Take It) London Scrapbook	OOO OOO	"Britain Can Take It" Spectator	— —	— —	— —	— —	1,024	With Bessie Love and Basil Radford. First despatched overseas 4/42. R. Vol. III, p. 70 Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey
Making a Compost Heap Men of the Lightship Men of Tomorrow Merchant Seamen Middle East, The	CFL I CFL T O CFL NT O CFL T O CFL 5-M O	Realist G.P.O. Technique Crown Shell	(F. Sainsbury) Cavalcanti S. Box & J. Carr J. B. Hughes E. Anstey	— — — — —	— — — — —	— — — — —	392 2,272 898 1,475 650	Home T. dist. by G.F.D. R. Vol. I, x, p. 88 Animated map by Francis Rodker, R. Vol. III, p. 70
Miss Grant Goes to the Door (Miss Knowall) Mr. Borland Thinks Again	CFL 5-M O W 5-M	D. & P. — See "The Scaremongers"	B. D. Hurst — British Films	B. D. Hurst — P. Rotha	— — —	— — 9 40	680 700	With Herbert Lomas, Emylia Williams, Beatrix Lehmann and others
Mr. Proudfoot Shows a Light Mobile Engineers More Eggs from Your Hens Mother and Child	CFL 5-M O S-M O CFL I CFL NT O	20th Century Fox Strand Merton Park Realist	(E. Black) D. Taylor — —	H. Mason M. Gordon J. Rogers F. Sainsbury	3 41 3 42 1 42 11 40	5 41 5 42 9 42 9 44	693 683 973 944	R. Vol. III, p. 71 Assoc. Prod.: Edgar Anstey, R. Vol. III, p. 21 With Barbara Mullen. Assoc. Prod.: Basil Wright, R. Vol. I, x, p. 9 Technicolor Abstract. Home T. Dist. by Newsreel Association
Musical Poster No. 1	T O	—	—	L. Lye	—	7 40	225	Library compilation with diagrams by Francis Rodker, R. Vol. III, p. 6
Naval Operations	CFL 5-M O	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Sharpe	12 41	3 42	799	R. Vol. I, vii, p. 7 With Herbert Lomas & others. R. Vol. II, p. 167 Commentary by Graham Greene
Neighbours Under Fire New Acres New Bread, The	CFL 5-M O S-M O CFL I	Strand Shell Merton Park	E. Anstey	— — —	12 40 8 41 —	2 41 — 8 41	662 748 600	R. Vol. I, vii, p. 7 With Herbert Lomas & others. R. Vol. II, p. 167 Commentary by Graham Greene
New Britain, The	CFL NT O W	Strand	A. Shaw	R. Keene	—	10 40	1,000	R. Vol. I, vii, p. 13 Commentary by Graham Greene
Newspaper Train New Towns for Old Night Shift Night Watch	CFL 5-M O S-M O CFL NT O CFL 5-M O	Realist Strand P. Rotha Prod. D. Taylor	— — P. Rotha D. Taylor	— — — —	1 42 7 42 — 7 41	4 42 11 42 — 9 41	542 595 1,412 694	R. Vol. III, p. 30 R. Vol. III, p. 37 Assoc. Prod.: R. Bond, With Anne Firth, Cyril Chamberlain and others. R. Vol. II, p. 128
No Accidents Now You're Talking	CFL I O CFL T O	Scottish Films Ealing	— M. Balcon	— —	— —	7 42 5 40	876 1,100	With Sebastian Shaw, Dorothy Hayson & others. Home T. dist. by M.G.M. R. Vol. I, v, p. 17 R. Vol. I, x, p. 8
Nurse! (Nursery of the Navy) Oatmeal Porridge 100,000,000 Women Ordinary People Our School Out and About Paratroops Partners in Crime Pilot is Safe, The Post 23	CFL NT O CFL I CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O CFL NT O CFL NT O CFL NT O CFL NT O CFL 5-M O CFL 5-M O CFL NT O	Pathé See "Sea Cadets" Verity Soviet Film Agency Crown Realist G.B.I. Celluloid Despatch Gainsborough Crown Strand	— — — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — — —	— — — — — — — — — — —	874 600 848 2,447 1,562 805 878 792 792 926	R. Vol. I, vii, p. 7 Library compilation First despatched overseas 5/41 R. Vol. II, p. 247 Newsreel compilation. Edited by Sylvia Cummins. R. Vol. II, p. 191 R. Vol. II, p. 209



TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATE	LENGTH	NOTES
Potatoes	CFI 1	Verity	—	Jay Lewis	—	600	R. Vol. I, xii, p. 7
Plastic Surgery in Wartime	CFI OOO	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	—	2,328 & 330	Commentary by Sir Harold Gillies, in "Plastic Surgery". A short addition (330ft.) is titled "Plastic Surgery". First despatched overseas 10/41
Queen's Messengers	CFI 5-M O	Strand	—	Jay Lewis	7/41	9/41	606
R.A.F. in Action	CFI OOO	Movietone News	—	—	—	1,42	937
Raising Sailors	CFI NT O	Pathé	F. Watts	A. Curtis	1/41	9/40	1,100
Raising Soldiers	CFI NT O	Movietone News	—	—	2/40	9/40	910
Rat Destruction	CFI 1	Paul Rotha Prod.	—	Budge Cooper	—	8/42	898
Rat Materials	CFI NT O	G.B.L. Prod.	—	Mary Field	—	12/40	1,037
Religion and the People	CFI NT O	British Films	—	A. Buchanan	—	10/40	1,372
Ring of Steel	OOO	Paramount	G. Cummins	—	—	—	1,202
Royal Observer Corps	CFI 5-M O	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	G. Gunn	12/41	3/42	666
Sash Hour	CFI 5-M O	20th Century Fox	(M. Balcan)	A. Asquith	1/42	4/42	552
Salvage with a Smile	CFI 5-M O	Ealing	—	A. Brunel	8/40	10/40	600
Scaremonsters, The	5-M	D. & P.	—	Graham Cutts	9/40	—	673
Scotland Speaks	CFI 1	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Elliott	4/41	9/41	1,897
Sea Cadets	CFI 5-M O	Strand	—	Jay Lewis	7/41	9/41	715
Sea Fort	CFI 5-M O	Ealing	—	I. Dalrymple	8/40	10/40	620
Shipbuilders	CFI NT O	G.B.L.	—	L. Schauder	11/40	1/41	973
Shunter Black's Night Off	CFI 5-M O	Verity	S. Box & J. Carr	M. Munden	8/41	1/42	565
Sludge	CFI 1 O	British Films	—	A. Buchanan	—	10/40	1,109
Simple Soups	CFI 1	Brit. Found. Pict.	—	R. Haines	—	10/41	852
Sowing and Planting	CFI 1 O	Selwyn	C. Radley	J. Elliott	—	11/41	1,100
Speed-up and Welfare (Spring Offensive)	See "Unrecorded Victory"	—	—	—	—	—	—
Squadron 992	T O	G.P.O.	Cavalcanti	A. Buchanan	6/40	—	2,038
Start a Land Club	CFI 5-M	Films of G.B.	—	H. Watt	7/42	10/42	688
Steaming	CFI 1 O	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Jay Lewis	—	12/40	600
Storing Vegetables Indoors	CFI 1 O	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Marg. Thomson	—	3/42	1,138
Storing Vegetables Outdoors	CFI 1 O	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Marg. Thomson	—	3/42	785
Story of an Air Communique, The	5-M O	Crown	(H. Watt)	(R. Elton)	11/41	—	518
The Sword of the Spirit, The	OOO	Verity	J. Carr & S. Box	H. Cass	—	—	1,384
Tale of Two Cities	CFI 5-M O	Crown	—	—	2/42	3/42	688
Target for Tonight	T O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	H. Watt	8/41	—	4,473
Tram, The	CFI 5-M	A.B.P.C.	—	L. Arliss & N. Lee	8/41	11/42	520
Telefooters, The	5-M	Verity	—	(J. Cartairs)	2/41	—	609
They Also Serve	CFI NT O	Realist	—	Ruby Grierson	—	12/40	907
They Keep the Wheels Turning	CFI NT O	G.B.L.	—	F. Searle	—	1/42	1,017
They Met in London	CFI NT O	Paul Rotha Prod.	—	—	—	—	—
They Speak for Themselves	CFI NT O	Seven League	P. Rotha	H. Nietter	—	7/42	691
(This is England)	See "Heart of Britain"	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tomorrow is Yours	CFI NT O	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Carr	—	12/40	910
Transfer of Skill	CFI NT O	Shell	A. Elton	G. Bell	—	12/40	931
Two Cooks and a Cabaret	CFI 1	A. & D.	—	A. Bryce	—	10/41	549
Undersiege Patrol	T O	Paramount	—	—	2/40	—	567
Unrecorded Victory	CFI T O	C.P.O.	A. Cavalcanti	H. Jennings	1/41	10/40	1,855
Venture Adventure	CFI 5-M O	Grown	—	—	11/41	2/42	679
Victory over Darkness	CFI 5-M O	Realist	I. Dalrymple	G. Hasse	—	3/42	523
(Village School)	See "Ashley Green Goes to School"	—	—	—	—	—	—
Visit from Canada, A	CFI 5-M O	Realist	—	(J. Taylor)	5/41	7/41	600
Voice of the Guns, The	T O	Pathé	—	—	6/40	—	976
War and Order	CFI 5-M O	G.P.O.	(H. Watt)	C. Hasse	1/41	10/40	626
War in the East	CFI 5-M O	Shell	(E. Anstey)	(N. Baxter)	12/41	3/42	635
War-time Factory	CFI NT O	Strand	A. Shaw	E. Anstey	—	10/40	980
Wavell's 30,000	T O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	J. Monck	3/42	—	4,309
Way to Plough, A	CFI 1 O	Verity	S. Box & J. Carr	C. Hornby	—	12/41	1,431
Welfare of the Workers	CFI NT O	G.P.O.	(H. Watt)	P. Jackson	7/41	11/40	827
Westward Ho!	CFI 5-M	G.B.L.	D. & P.	D. Dickinson	12/40	2/41	630
We've Got to Get Rid of the Rats	CFI 5-M	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Carr	—	—	—
We Won't Forget	OOO	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	—	—	1,122
When the Pie was Opened	CFI 1	Realist	—	L. Lye	—	10/41	737
Tomatoe Battlefield	CFI NT O	Seven League	—	H. Naylor	—	8/40	926
Winged Messengers	5-M O W	G.B.L.	—	Mary Field	6/41	9/41	692
Winter on the Farm	CFI NT O	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	9/42	1,347
Women at War	OOO	Verity	—	—	—	—	901
Words for Battle	CFI 5-M O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	—	4/41	6/41	707
W.R.N.S.	CFI 5-M O	Strand	D. Taylor	L. Moffat	11/41	2/42	746
W.V.S.	CFI NT O	Verity	S. Box & J. Carr	Louise Birt	—	2/42	2,034
Worker and Warfront (I)	CFI NT O	—	—	—	—	5/42	1,075
Work Party	5-M	Realist	(J. Taylor)	L. Lye	6/42	—	650
Yesterday is Over Your Shoulder	CFI 5-M O	D. & P.	T. Dickinson	T. Dickinson	9/40	11/40	764
You're Telling Me	CFI 5-M O	Paul Rotha Prod.	P. Rotha	B. Peake	3/41	5/41	566
Youth Takes a Hand	CFI NT O	Films of G.B.	A. Buchanan	A. Buchanan	—	1/42	1,125

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

Owned and published by FILM CENTRE LTD. 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W.1 GERRARD 4253

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## 2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

Till December, 1941, Trailers were about 200 ft. in length; since that date they have been 125 ft. in length.

TITLE OR THEME	PROD. UNIT	DEPT. CONCERNED	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
What To Do in an Air Raid	—	Home Security	5/40	A separate version made by each newsreel company
Incendiary Bomb	Universal	Home Security	6/40	
Local Defence Volunteers	Movietone	War Office	8/40	
Anderson Shelter (1)	Pathe	Home Security	9/40	
Gas Masks	G.B. News	Home Security	9/40	
Your Home as an Air Raid Shelter	Universal	Home Security	10/40	
Post Early	Pathe	G.P.O.	12/40	
Anderson Shelter (2)	Universal	Home Security	12/40	
Morning Blackout	G.B. News	Home Security	1/41	
Economical Use of Coal	Movietone	Mines	2/41	Regional distribution only
Recruits for Munitions	A. Buchanan	Labour	3/41	Re-issued 6/41
Stop that Fire	Crown	Home Security	3/41	Also issued non-theatrically
Carry Your Gasmask	Universal	Home Security	5/41	
Diphtheria	G.B. News	Health	5/41	
Paper Saving	Universal	Health	7/41	
Help for the Homeless	G.B. News	Health and Home Security	8/41	
Shelter at Home	Movietone	Home Security	8/41	
Empty Houses	Pathe	Home Security	9/41	
Address Clearly	Universal	G.P.O.	9/41	
Fuel Economy (Heating)	Films of G.B.	Mines	12/41	
Post Early	Pub. Pics.	G.P.O.	12/41	
Food Advice Centre	Verity	Food	12/41	
Swimming	Pub. Pics.	Supply	12/41	Regional distribution only
Sneezing	Strand	Health	1/42	With Cyril Fletcher
Fuel Economy (Cooking)	Films of G.B.	Mines	1/42	
A.T.S.	N.S.S.	Labour	1/42	Regional distribution only
Milk	Pub. Pics.	Food	1/42	
Fuel Economy (Hot Water)	Films of G.B.	Mines	2/42	
Paper Salvage	Films of G.B.	Supply	3/42	
Rats	Strand	Food	3/42	
Metal Salvage	Films of G.B.	Supply	5/42	
Rubber Salvage	Films of G.B.	Supply	6/42	With Basil Radford

## 3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

This list does not include nine films acquired, after the outbreak of war, from the British Council, the Imperial Institute and Messrs. Kodak Ltd. These films—some of which were re-edited—include not only Emire subjects, but "Killing the Killer" (a fight between a mongoose and a cobra to symbolise Churchill and Hitler) and a Chaplin film.

TITLE	LENGTH	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS	NOTES
Children of the Empire	8/60	3/40	Re-edited from a film in the Imperial Institute
Empire at Work, The	2,200	3/40	
Heritage of Defence	920	3/40	Compiled chiefly from library material by British Films Ltd.
British Army, The	2,062	3/40	Re-edited from a film in the Kodak Library
Mr. English at Home	2,630	11/40	
Story of Cotton, The	1,150	11/40	
Royal Air Force, The	1,940	11/40	
R.A.F. Commentary	1,057	12/40	
Guns in the Desert	476	1/41	Re-edited version of "Italy Beware"
Progress in the Colonies	1,030	1/41	
English and African Life	636	5/41	
African in London, An	1,125	7/41	
This is a Searchlight	495	11/41	
This is a Special Constable	815	11/41	
This is a Barrage Balloon	672	11/41	
This is an Anti-Aircraft Gun	690	11/41	
These are Paratroops	1,000	12/41	War Office material
This is an A.R.P. Warden	987	12/41	
Our Indian Soldiers	825	3/42	Material from "A Day with the Indian Army"
Self Help in Food	1,175	2/42	
With our African Troops—Early Training	266 (16 mm.)	2/42	African material
With our African Troops—on Active Service	708	2/42	
Soldiers' Comforts from Uganda	755	2/42	
This is a Fireman	1,030	4/42	
These are British Soldiers	435	4/42	
Bren Gun Carriers	707	6/42	Partly War Office material
These are A.T.S. and W.R.N.S.	205 (16 mm.)	6/42	M.O.I. material
Barbados Day at Portsmouth	230 (16 mm.)	6/42	
Uganda Police	243 (16 mm.)	7/42	African material

(Continued from page 135)

We believe there are two reasons:—

First, the Ministry of Information plays safe. Better no response at all to its propaganda than a lifted eyebrow from the 1922 Committee, or a frown from the T.U.C. Better be bland, equivocal, dignified and insipid. Yet propaganda which is safe will never inspire; propaganda which raises no questions will raise no feelings either. Bland equivocal dignified propaganda follows public opinion and neither leads nor even expresses it. Bland equivocal dignified propaganda is, in the last resort, defeatist propaganda. Propaganda which does not lead, in the end impedes.

The second reason is to be found in the whole set-up of the M.O.I. itself in relation to the government. For the M.O.I. does not initiate propaganda policy; it is subordinate to the other government departments. It is a channel for the

dissemination of other people's propaganda lines. It cannot command; it can only obey or obstruct or argue. This battle was fought and lost many months back, partly in the House of Commons under the maladroit Duff Cooper, partly outside the House over the question whether the M.O.I. should be responsible for the Service news bulletins, or whether each Service should compile its own news handouts. The Services won, with disastrous results for our propaganda.

Thus it is that the Films Division, instead of laying down policy on facts supplied to it, is at the mercy of half the petty officials in Whitehall. Any film scheme the M.O.I. puts up can be shot to pieces by any official who prefers the *status quo* to action, any official who is trying to get on the right side of big business after the war, or any official who looks for personal preferment to the party bosses of the Conservative or Labour

political machines. Small wonder then that every propaganda theme which hits is suspect, every theme which has not the support of every small, unrepresentative and conflicting minority is impeded, every reference to the new social organisations derived from the war is smothered, because their development represents a diminution of the power of various interests to wage the war in a way best suited to their own particular ideas.

In this lies what must be the next struggle of the Ministry of Information. It must become a creator of propaganda detached from, and not subservient to, the local, private and often conflicting notions of government departments. The M.O.I. must initiate and plan policy as a whole. This means that it must express the will of the people in war. This issue must be fought and won. Till it is, the Films Division policy will remain truncated and one-sided.

## I. ACQUIRED FILMS

## 1. Films are listed under the following headings:—

Africa  
 Army Film Unit (A.F.U.)  
 Australia and New Zealand  
 British Commercial Gas Association (B.C.G.A.)  
 British Council  
 Cadbury Brothers Ltd.  
 Canada  
 Central Council for Health Education  
 Imperial Chemical Industries  
 India  
 London Fire Brigade  
 Miscellaneous

National Savings Committee  
 Poland  
 Shell Film Unit  
 U.S.A.  
 (March of Time)  
 U.S.S.R.

## 2. Films from the G.P.O. and the Imperial Institute Library are excluded.

## 3. Film lengths are recorded in feet of 35 mm. gauge or in minutes of 16 mm. gauge.

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	SOURCE	PRODUCT UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES	LENGTH	NOTES		
AFRICA										
Fighters of the Veldt	CFL O	Govt. of Sth. Africa	African Film Productions	—	—	10, 40	1,965	R. Vol. I, xi, p. 15		
(Gold Coast)										
Men of Africa	CFL O	Listed under Cadbury Colonial Empire Marketing Board	—	B. Wright	A. Shaw	6, 40	10, 40	1,690	Home T distribution by Anglo-American. R. Vol. I, vi, p. 7	
Road to Victory	OOO	Govt. of Sth. Africa	African Film Productions	—	—	—	—	461	First despatched overseas 7, 41. See "South Africa Marches"	
Sinews of War	CFL O	Govt. of Sth. Africa	African Film Productions	—	—	—	11, 41	1,413	First despatched overseas 7, 41. See "South Africa Marches"	
South Africa Marches	5-M O	—	—	—	—	8, 41	—	607	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from "Sinews of War" and "Road to Victory"	
War Came to Kenya	CFL O	Kenya Information Office	African Film Productions	—	G. Johnson	—	1, 42	1,636	Home T dist. by R.K.O.	
ARMY FILM UNIT										
Army Lays the Rails, The	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	—	—	(T. d'Eyncourt)	1, 42	5, 42	584	Commentary by Eric Baume	
A.T.S.	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	—	—	(H. Stewart)	6, 41	8, 41	676	R. Vol. II, p. 128	
Lion of Judah	CFL O	A.F.U.	—	—	(S. Boothby)	3, 41	9, 41	1,382	R. Vol. II, p. 209	
Lofoten	CFL O	A.F.U.	—	—	(T. d'Eyncourt)	3, 41	5, 41	560	R. Vol. II, p. 68	
London Outpost	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	—	—	(T. d'Eyncourt)	2, 41	—	799	See also "Gards of the North" (Canada), assembled partly from the same material and available for N. Use. R. Vol. II, p. 47	
Right Man, The	CFL 5-M	A.F.U.	—	—	(A. Bryce)	6, 42	10, 42	711	R. Vol. III, p. 100	
Siege of Tobruk	CFL W	A.F.U.	—	—	—	6, 42	6, 42	1,553	—	
Special Despatch	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	—	—	(H. Stewart)	11, 41	2, 42	509	R. Vol. II, p. 207	
Troopship	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	—	—	(H. Stewart)	7, 42	11, 42	686	R. Vol. III, p. 100	
AUSTRALASIA										
Australia Marches with Britain (Australia at War)	CFL O	Nat. Film Coun. Listed under U.S.A. (March of Time)	Cine Snd. Stud.	—	K. Hall	—	11, 41	1,432	—	
(It's the Navy)										
Rescuing the Fleet at Sea (Nation is Built, A)	CFL O	Nat. Film Coun. See "Wealth of Australia"	—	—	A. Mills	—	—	1,41	993	First despatched overseas 11, 41
New Zealand Has Wines	CFL 5-M	Govt. of New Zealand	New Zealand Nat. Film Unit	—	—	9, 41	11, 41	484	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from "Wealth of New Zealand"	
Royal Australian Navy	CFL 5-M O	National Film Council	Branch Studios, Melbourne	E. Brereton	R. Smart	9, 41	10, 41	602	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from "It's the Navy"	
Wealth of Australia	CFL O	Govt. of New South Wales	—	F. Harley	—	—	1, 42	946	Re-edited by Horace Shepherd from "A Nation is Built"	
B.C.G.A.										
Choose Cheese	CFL W	B.C.G.A.	Realist	J. Taylor	Ruby Grierson	—	10, 40	510	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. I, ix, p. 12	
Eating at Work	CFL	B.C.G.A.	Strand	E. Anstey	R. Bond	—	2, 42	1,150	R. Vol. II, p. 189	
Green Food for Health	CFL	B.C.G.A.	Realist	J. Taylor	Ruby Grierson	—	10, 40	509	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. I, ix, p. 12	
If Coffee from Gold	CFL	B.C.G.A.	Realist	E. Anstey	P. Fletcher	—	11, 40	1,070	R. Vol. I, xi, p. 12	
Londoners, The	CFL	B.C.G.A.	Realist	B. Wright	J. Taylor	—	10, 40	18 mins.	16 mm.	
Plan for Living	CFL W	B.C.G.A.	G.B.I.	D. Carter	R. Grierson	—	9, 40	1,972	—	
What's for Dinner?	CFL W	B.C.G.A.	Realist	J. Taylor	Ruby Grierson	—	10, 40	650	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. I, ix, p. 12	
BRITISH COUNCIL										
Raiding Air Fighters	OOO	B.C.	Paramount	T. Cummins	—	—	—	1,600	—	
Sailors Without Uniform	CFL	B.C.	Spectator	I. Scott	I. Scott	—	10, 41	9 mins.	16 mm.	
S.O.S.	CFL	B.C.	Eldridge & Carris	J. Eldridge	J. Eldridge	—	10, 41	14 mins.	16 mm. R. Vol. I, Vol. viii, p. 12	
Steel Goes to Sea	CFL	B.C.	Merton Park	—	John Lewis	—	10, 41	16 mins.	16 mm.	
Uster	CFL O	B.C.	Strand	A. Shaw	R. Keene	—	10, 41	12 mins.	16 mm. R. Vol. II, p. 9	
Women in Wartime	CFL O W	B.C.	Movietone	—	—	—	11, 40	902	Adapted from "Britannia was a Woman"	
CADBURY										
Food Convoy	CFL O	Cadbury	Merton Park	A. Taylor	J. Lewis	—	10, 40	925	—	
Gold Coast	CFL	Cadbury	Merton Park	W. Crichton	—	—	5, 41	1,200	—	
Salute to Farmers	CFL O	Cadbury	Merton Park	—	M. Tully	—	5, 41	1,700	—	
CANADA										
Atlantic Patrol	CFL O	National Film Board	Motion Picture Bureau	—	S. Legg	—	10, 40	895	—	
(Canada at War)										
Children from Overseas	OOO	Listed under U.S.A. (March of Time)	National Film Board	S. Legg	S. Hawes	—	—	946	First despatched overseas 3/41	
Front of Steel	OOO	National Film Board	Associated Screen Studios	S. Legg	J. McDougall	—	—	447	First despatched overseas 10, 40	
Guards of the North	CFL	Nat. Film Board	Audio Pictures	—	T. d'Eyncourt	—	5, 41	978	See also "Northern Outpost" (A.F.U.)	
Heroes of the Atlantic	CFL O	Nat. Film Board	Motion Picture Bureau	—	J. Davidson	—	3, 42	1,389	—	
Home Front, The (Kinsman, The)	CFL W	Nat. Film Board	Motion P. Bur.	I. Badgeley	S. Hawes	—	10, 40	964	R. Vol. I, xi, p. 14	
Letter from Aldershot	CFL O W	Nat. Film Board	Realist	—	J. Taylor	—	10, 40	996	R. Vol. I, xi, p. 12	
North West Frontier	CFL	Nat. Film Board	Motion P. Bur.	J. Beveridge	—	—	9, 42	2,576	—	
Peoples of Canada	CFL O	Nat. Film Board	Associated Screen Studios	S. Legg	G. Spauling	—	9, 41	1,938	—	
Prairie Gold	CFL O	Canadian Govt. Wheat Board	—	—	G. Spauling	—	1, 42	1,836	Re-edited by H. Shepherd from "The Kinsman"	
Wines of Youth	CFL O	National Film Board	Audio Pictures	R. Spottiswoode & S. Legg	R. Barlow	—	12, 40	1,599	—	
Wood for War	CFL 5-M O	Canadian Army Film Unit	C.A.F.U.	—	(R. McDougall)	6, 42	10, 42	736	Produced in Great Britain. R. Vol. III p. 37	
CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH EDUCATION										
Breath of Danger	CFL	Central Council	G.B.I.	(B. Woolfe)	S. Irving	—	10, 41	829	—	
Carry on, Children	CFL	Central Council	Spectator	I. Scott	M. Hankinson	—	11, 41	999	—	
I.C.I.										
Food from Straw	CFL	I.C.I.	G.B.I.	—	S. Irving	—	5, 42	550	R. Vol. II, p. 128	
Rabbit Pest, The	CFL	Plant Prot. Ltd.	Strand	D. Taylor	G. Gibbs	—	6, 41	524	—	
INDIA										
Arms from India	CFL O	Films Advisory Board	Indian Film Unit	A. Shaw	Ezra Mir & Sheraz Farukhi	—	3, 42	935	Original title "Tools for the Job"	
Changing Face of India, The	CFL O	Films Advisory Board	Indian Film Unit	A. Shaw	—	—	9, 42	1,000	First despatched overseas 3/42	

TITLE	ABBREVIATION	SOURCE	PRODUCT/N UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATE	LENGTH	NOTES
(Day in the Life of the Indian Army, A)		See "India Marches"						
Defenders of India, The	CFL O	Films Ad. Board	Bombay Talkies	—	—	3/42	776	Foreword by Gen. Sir Claude Auchinleck
Handy Man, The	CFL O	Films Ad. Board	Indian Film U.	—	—	3/42	787	
India Arms for Victory	CFL O	Films Ad. Board	Famous Cine Lab. Production	—	S. V. Kriparan	1,155		First despatched overseas 1/42
India Marches	CFL 5-M O	Government of India	Bombay Talkies	—	—	3/41	5/41	490
Made in India	CFL O	Films Advisory Board	Indian Film Unit	A. Shaw	Ezra Mir & Sherrozz Farrukhi	—	5/42	1,200
Men of India	CFL 5-M O	Films Advisory Board	Indian Film Unit	A. Shaw	Ezra Mir	4/42	8/42	750
(Tools for the Job) (Wartime Factory)		See "Arms from India"						
Women of India	CFL O	Films Ad. Board	Indian Film U.	A. Shaw	A. Bhaskar Rao	—	9/42	932
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE		See "Men of India"						
City Fire, Dec. 29th, 1940	CFL	Ministry of Home Security	London Fire Brigade	—	—	—	9/42	1,101
Hook Ladder Drill	CFL	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	9/42	1,983
London Blitz, May 10-11, 1941	CFL	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	9/42	659
Pembroke Docks Fire	CFL	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	9/42	500
Surrey Commercial Docks Fire, September, 1940	CFL	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	9/42	16 mins.
Thameshaven Fire	CFL	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	9/42	928
MISCellaneous								
Canteen on Wheels	CFL W	See "Mobile Canteen"						
Fire	CFL W	Ministry of Home Security	Brit. Films Ltd.	—	—	—	10/40	1,482
Five Faces From Family to Farm	CFL W	Fed. Malay States	Strand	D. Taylor	A. Shaw	—	10/41	1,707
Good Landfall, A Gun, The	CFL OOO	Salvation Army	Paramount	D. Taylor	M. Gordon	—	2/42	1,003
Handicraft Happiness	CFL	National Fed. of Women's Inst.	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	1/41	11 mins.	1,400
Harness your Horsepower	CFL	Ford Motor Co.	Verity	S. Box and J. Carr	C. Hornby	—	5/42	1,400
H.M. Motor Launches	CFL O	Admiralty	G. B. News	—	—	—	6/42	896
It All Depends on You	CFL O	Thames Bld. Mills	Merton Park	R. Thumwood	—	—	8/41	8 mins.
Machines and Men	CFL O	C.W.S.	G.W. Wynn	—	—	—	1/42	890
Madagascar	CFL O	Movietone	Movietone	—	—	—	6/42	8 mins.
Medieval Village	CFL	G.B.I.	G.B.I.	—	—	—	10/40	18 mins.
Miss	CFL O	Elec. Dev. Assoc.	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	—	10/40	1,212
Mobile Canteen	CFL 5-M O	Empire Tea Bureau	Verity	B. Wright	J. Lewis	4/41	6/41	710
Modern Spirit, The	CFL	G.B.I.	G.B.I.	—	F. Bundy	—	2/41	16 mins.
Quilting	CFL	National Fed. of Women's Inst.	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	—	1/41	11 mins.
Red Cross in Action, The	CFL O	Red Cross and St. John	Movietone	G. Sanger	—	—	5/41	900
Roots of Victory	CFL W	Min. of Food & Min. of Agric.	Verity	—	—	—	8/41	750
Rug Making	CFL	National Fed. of Women's Inst.	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	—	1/41	11 mins.
Simplified First Aid Tea is Served	CFL W	Films of G. Brit.	Films of G.B. Verity	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/41	1,190
Thrift	CFL	National Fed. of Women's Inst.	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	—	1/41	11 mins.
Unconquerable Minesweepers War Front	OOO	G.D.F.s	Priority Pds. Strand	Rutherford	F. Elbridge	—	—	900
Welsh Plant Breeding Stations	CFL	Imperial Relations Trust	G.B.I.	A. Shaw (A. Elton)	J. Darden	—	10/41	16 mins.
Wisdom of the Wild Young Veteran	CFL OOO	Elec. Dev. Assoc. Assoc. Brit. Film Distributors	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field A. Cavalcanti	—	2/41	1,177
NATIONAL SAVINGS								
Albert's Savings	CFL 5-M W	N.S.C.	Merton Park	(W. Williams)(H. Purcell)	—	8/40	10/40	485
Down Our Street	CFL 5-M W	N.S.C.	Merton Park	—	T. Bishop	—	6/42	—
Owner Comes Aboard	CFL 5-M W	N.S.C.	Spectator	I. Scott	A. Bryce	11/40	1/41	650
Owner Goes Afloat	CFL 5-M O	N.S.C.	Spectator	I. Scott	I. Scott	—	4/42	6/41
Sam Pops Joins the Navy	5-M O	N.S.C.	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Seale	—	12/41	734
Seaman Frank Goes to Sea	5-M O	N.S.C.	Concannon	D. de Marney	E. Cekalski	1/42	—	657
POLAND								
Diary of a Polish Airman, The	CFL 5-M O	Concannon Films	Concannon Film	D. de Marney	E. Cekalski	3/42	6/42	658
This is Poland	CFL O	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	2/41	18 mins.
Poles Weigh Anchor, The	CFL O	Do.	Do.	—	—	—	6/42	12 mins.
White Eagle, The	CFL O	Do.	Do.	—	E. Cekalski	—	10/41	27 mins.
SHELL FILM UNIT								
Aircrow	CFL O	Petro. Fms. Bur.	Shell	A. Elton	G. Tharpe	—	10/40	1933
Fruit Spraying	CFL	Tech. Products	Shell	E. Anstey	Kay Mander	—	5/42	18 mins.
Protection of Fruit	CFL	Petro. Fms. Bur.	Shell	A. Elton	G. Tharpe	—	10/40	1,700
Turn of the Furrow, The	CFL O	Petro. Fms. Bur.	Shell	E. Anstey	P. Baylis	—	2/41	1,859
U.S.A.								
Adventure in the Bronx	CFL	British Library of Information	Film Associates	—	—	—	9/42	1,009
Bomber	CFL	Nat. Defence Committee	Emerg. Managemt. Fm. U.	—	—	—	2/42	904
Child Went Forth, A	CFL	N.Y. University Film Library	—	J. Losey	J. Ferno	—	—	9/42
City, The	CFL	Museum of Modern Art	American Doc. Films	—	R. Steiner, W. van Dyke, & R. Bretz	—	9/42	1,017
Defence for America	CFL	Nat. Defence Committee	Emerg. Managemt. Fm. U.	—	L. Roush	—	2/42	935
From Ships of the Air	CFL	U.S. Marine Corps	U.S. Marine Corps Film U.	—	—	—	2/42	551



TITLE	ABBREVIATION	SOURCE	PRODUCT UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATE	NT	LENGTH	NOTES
Harvest for Tomorrow	CFL	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	Dept. of Agric. Film Unit	—	P. Burnford	—	9/42	2,477	
Home Place, The Lake Carrier	CFL	Do.	Do.	—	R. Evans	—	9/42	2,894	
Minnesota Document	CFL	University of Minnesota	Visual Education Service	—	R. Kisack	—	9/42	50 mins.	16 mm.
Power and the Land Tanks	CFL	B.L.I.	—	—	—	—	9/42	3,496	
What So Proudly We Hail	CFL	Nat. Defence Committee	Emerg. Management, Film U.	—	—	—	6/42	940	Commentary by Orson Welles.
(MARCH OF TIME)	CFL	Gen. Motors Ltd.	—	—	—	—	9/42	1,662	
America Speaks Her Mind	CFL	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	9/41	18 mins.	16 mm. R. Vol. II, p. 67
Australia War	CFL W	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	9/41	18 mins.	16 mm. R. Vol. II, p. 107
Battle Fleets of Britain	CFL O	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	10/40	18 mins.	16 mm.
Britain's R.A.F.	CFL O	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	10/41	10 mins.	16 mm. First despatched overseas 6/41. R. Vol. I, xii, p. 7
Canada at War	CFL O	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	11/40	18 mins.	16 mm. R. Vol. I, v, p. 7
Viet of Norway	CFL O	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	6/42	20 mins.	16 mm. R. Vol. II, p. 16 mm. 229
New Zealand's Eight Million Yankees	CFL	M.O.T.	—	—	—	—	9/42	20 mins.	Limited distribution
U.S.S.R.	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.*	—	—	—	—	12/41	728	
A Day on the Soviet Front	5-M O	S.W.N.F.A.	—	—	—	5/42	627		Library compilation.
Five Men of Velich	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	Lenfilm	—	—	—	1/42	1,504	Dubbed in English
100 for 1	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	—	—	—	—	12/41	996	
Odessa Besieged	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	—	—	—	—	8/42	714	Library compilation
Other R.A.F. - The Salute to the Soviet	CFL	Pathe	Pathe Central Studio, Moscow	—	—	—	11/41	1,000	Newsreel compilation
Soviet Harvest	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	—	—	—	—	12/41	740	
Soviet Schoolchild	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	Do.	—	—	—	6/42	2,165	
Soviet Women	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	Do.	—	—	—	12/41	656	
Strong Point 42	CFL	S.W.N.F.A.	Mosfilm	—	—	—	1/42	1,646	Dubbed in English
Three in a Shell Hole	CFL 5-M O	S.W.N.F.A.	Mosfilm	Lionel Leonov	—	12/41	3/42	846	Dubbed in English. R. Vol. III, p. 6

\*Soviet War News Film Agency

## 5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE M.O.I.

	FOOTAGE OF FILMS					NUMBER OF FILMS				
	Sept. 3- Dec. 31 1939	1940	1941	Jan. 1- June 30 1942	TOTAL	Sept. 3- Dec. 31 1939	1940	1941	Jan. 1- June 30 1942	TOTAL
5-Minute	—	13,791	25,113	14,087	52,991	—	20	37	20	77
General Theatrical Distribution	3,130	13,543	9,228	8,773	34,674	2	12	5	3	22
General N.T. Distribution	—	23,545	7,890	19,420	50,855	—	23	7	13	43
Instructional and Training	—	4,109	10,290	16,634	31,023	—	6	12	16	34
Mainly for Overseas Distribution	—	—	—	13,019	13,019	—	—	—	9	9
Wholly for Overseas Distribution	—	3,100	11,093	6,702	20,895	—	3	10	5	18
Trailers	—	1,600*	3,000*	1,125†	5,725	—	8	15	9	32
TOTAL	3,130	59,688	66,604	79,760	209,182	2	72	86	80	240
Colonial Film Unit	15 mm.	11,919	7,836	5,535	25,290	—	8	10	11‡	29
Productions	16 mm.	—	—	944	944	—	—	—	—	—
(Acquired 5-Minute Films)	—	1,135	6,657	6,608	14,400	—	2	10	10	22

\* Average length 200 feet.

† Average length 125 feet.

‡ Includes 4 16mm. productions.

## 6. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS ACQUIRED BY THE M.O.I.

SOURCE	1940*			1941			JAN. 1—JUNE 30, 1942			TOTALS		
	C.F.L.	5-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	5-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	5-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	5-M	O.O.O.
Africa	2	—	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	4	1	1
A.F.U.	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	3	—	3	6	—
Australia & New Zealand	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	3	2	—
B.C.C.A.	6	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	7	—	—
British Council	1	—	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	—
Calcutta	4	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—
Canada	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	1†	—	9	1	2
Can. Council for Health Education	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
I.C.I.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
India	—	—	—	6	1	—	—	1	—	6	2	1
Laudon Fire Brigade	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	23	1	—
Miscellaneous	4	—	1	14	1	2	5	—	—	—	6	—
National Savings	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	3	1	—
Poland	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	1	—	3	—	—
Shell	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	—	—	12	—	—
U.S.A.	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	7	—	—
(March of Time)	—	—	—	3	—	—	4	1	—	9	2	—
U.S.S.R.	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	22	2	3	47	10	4	39	10	1	108	22	8

\*No films were acquired in 1939.

†Produced in Britain by Canadian Army Film Unit.



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.  
NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE

## Film of the Month

**In Which We Serve.** *Production:* Two Cities. *Story, Production, Direction and Music:* Noel Coward. *Camera:* Ronald Neame. *Art Direction:* G. E. Calthrop and David Rawnsley.

THIS is an exceptionally sincere and deeply moving film. It is also a final proof that British technicians in British studios can turn out stuff which in every respect is as good as anything their Hollywood colleagues can achieve. And it is one of the best war films ever made.

Even after a second viewing of *In Which We Serve*, these points still operate, and it is all the more necessary to try and formulate a straight critical attitude to the mood and purpose of the film. In doing this, one is paying Coward the compliment of treating his film seriously, not merely as an emotional or a patriotic success, but also as a considered attempt at propaganda. So here goes.

Firstly, the story in all essentials looks backward from the present. The future, except in terms of the continuance of the Navy and its traditions, doesn't get a look-in at all. In fact the whole structure of the film, with its ingenious and surprisingly successful flashback continuities, depends on an attitude which looks no further than today and accepts no perspectives other than the strictly parochial. This is a fair criticism, and one which Coward would probably not only accept, but would also argue the reasons why he chose these limitations. Secondly—and this arises from our firstly—the social structure of the British community is presented as a fixed and settled structure; nowhere is there any suggestion that the present war represents a revolution not only in thinking but in class relationships. This point must not be misunderstood, because Coward is one of the first people to put across with truth and realism the character and behaviour of three different income groups. The quarrel between the two women just before the bomb kills them; the conversation between the A.B. and his wife on Plymouth Hoe; the Petty Officer learning of the death of his wife; the Commander's Christmas dinner party; the youthful sailor who has been momentarily a coward—all these scenes are not merely dramatically correct but are recognisable as being about British people. But behind them all is the assumption that the continued existence of the present set-up is not questioned, and that the different "classes" (e.g. "upper", "middle" and "lower") will continue to live together with the acceptance of mutual barriers crossed only by ties of patriotism or of that warm human sentiment which has for years now been the facet of English character least understood abroad, and which partly explains the snail-like pace (hitherto, but not from now on) of our social revolution. Nowhere is this more marked than in one of the best and most realistic sequences of the film—the chance meeting in a railway train between Captain Kinross and his wife, and the A.B. and his bride. By the use of very perceptive dialogue and admirable direction Coward here delineates the inevitable mixture of goodwill and embarrassment, with both sides uneasily trying to do and say the right thing. It was a hundred to one chance against this scene being anything other than offensive, but it comes off triumphantly. In so doing it clinches the attitude already referred

to. The old structure of society is not being affected by the war, and this 'ere progress, if it goes on at all, only goes on a single track rail towards a horizon on which the parallel lines never meet.

It would be easy to go on from here and develop an argument that *In Which We Serve* is consciously or unconsciously fascist in intention, and one could have a field day on this line by taking up the whole relationship between the captain and his crew. It would be easy—but quite erroneous. For what Coward has done here is to delineate with considerable accuracy the atmosphere and behaviourism of a disciplined group of men on a warship; the relationships are, accordingly, a statement of attitudes and procedures of the Royal Navy, which happens to be a major weapon in the fight of the United Nations against the Axis powers (not that any reference to the United Nations appears in the film). No; at the very worst Coward's mistake was in not having the vision to tell his story other than in terms of the *limitations* of democracy, whereas the need today is to tell stories which indicate the possibilities, the potential changes and developments, and the new perspectives which democracy must now actively investigate, and mould into a better future.

All of which adds up to the fact that Coward has produced a superb piece of ad hoc, short-term propaganda—a film which, because it is sincere and not mawkish, realistic in effect and not a producer's dream world (like *Mrs. Miniver*), and truthful in its delineation of ordinary people, is something which will at the least of reckonings be a positive factor on our own screens and on many screens abroad.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### Autumn Issue

6d.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,  
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1

## No. 7

RFU

There were once two Men who travelled together, one of whom was blind. These two companions being, in the course of their journey, one time surprised by night upon the road, entered into a meadow, there to rest themselves till morning; and as soon as day appeared, they rose, got on horseback, and continued their journey. Now, the blind Man, instead of his whip, as ill fate would have it, had picked up a Serpent that was stiff with cold; but having it in his hand, as it grew a little warm, he felt it somewhat softer than his whip, which pleased him very much; he thought he had gained by the change, and therefore never minded the loss. In this manner he travelled some time; but when the sun began to appear and illuminate the world, his Companion perceived the Serpent, and with loud cries, "Friend," said he, "you have taken up a Serpent instead of your whip; throw it out of your hand, before you feel the mortal caresses of the venomous animal."

But the blind Man, believing that his friend had only jested with him to get away his whip, "What," said he, "do you envy my good luck? I lost my whip that was worth nothing, and here my kind fortune has sent me a new one. Pray do not take me for such a simpleton but that I can distinguish a Serpent from a whip."

With that his friend replied, "Companion. I am obliged by the laws of friendship and humanity to inform you of your danger; and therefore let me again assure you of your error, and conjure you, if you love your life, throw away the Serpent."

To which the blind Man, more exasperated than persuaded; "Why do you take all this pains to cheat me, and press me thus to throw away a thing which you intend, as soon as I have done so, to pick up yourself?" His Companion, grieved at his obstinacy, entreated him to be persuaded of the truth, swore he had no such design, and protested to him that what he held in his hand was a real and poisonous Serpent. But neither oaths nor protestations would prevail; the blind man would not alter his resolution. The sun by this time began to grow high, and his beams having warmed the Serpent by degrees, he began to crawl up the blind man's arm, which he immediately after bit in such a venomous manner, that he gave him his death wound.

Moral: Better be Dead than Done.

REALIST FILM UNIT  
47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

NOV-DEC., 1942

## CONTENTS

SIGNS OF THE TIMES	145-146
NOTES OF THE MONTH	147
U.S. DOLLAR AND BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY	148
FILM OF THE MONTH	149
PLAN FOR POST-WAR DOCUMENTARY	150
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	151-152, 156
CORRESPONDENCE	153, 155
A GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT	154
INDEX	157-160

VOL 3 NO. 11-12

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

ON November 26th the first leader in *The Times* was headed "Obligations of Victory". In this leader stress was laid on the fact that the people of Britain are extremely interested in the social structure of the State after the present war and are likely to become even more interested as the United Nations move more and more to the offensive and therefore towards victory. To quote directly from *The Times*, "The keen popular interest, even at a moment of spectacular military success, in domestic policies confirms the view that in the present War social reform stands in a closer and more direct relation to the national effort than Government spokesmen and Government propagandists have sometimes been prepared to recognise or admit."

*The Times*, by the way, might have added, but did not, that such thoughts are in the minds of the common people in every nation in the world, including those which are temporarily crushed under the Nazi heel.

There is nothing new in this attitude, which is indeed one which has been stressed in this journal at regular intervals since September 3rd, 1939. But a new element has entered since the United Nations, to the gratification of everyone, passed to the offensive. The invasion of North Africa, carrying with it the prospect of the re-opening of the Mediterranean to United Nations' shipping, and perhaps the invasion of Italy, was a tonic to everyone. Unfortunately this tonic was rendered temporarily inoperative by the Darlan episode. We have no wish to recapitulate this unpleasant blot on the War policy of the United Nations. Its main value was that it proved once and for all that there can, in this conflict, be no division between military and political activities. Whatever the military values of the Darlan episode may have been, their political repercussions in occupied France, to say nothing of the rest of occupied Europe, could never have been expected to be other than disastrous.

The peoples of the world, including those under Axis domination, are not merely fighting this war to beat Germany, Italy and Japan. They are fighting it because by beating Germany, Italy and Japan they will at the same time be laying the foundations for a new life for the common people of the world. Even if the world to them is limited by their own street or their own town, their attitude of mind is none the less positive and practical in universal terms. It is this universal aspect which lies behind *The Times* leader when it says "Only a courageous and far-reaching policy proclaimed in broad outline with the full weight of Government authority can build up a national conviction that victory will bring to the people of this country a 'freedom from want' and a 'freedom from fear' (above all from fear of unemployment) not known in

the years before 1939". In this *The Times* speaks not only for the people of this country but for the people of the world; and it is this universal issue which the propagandists in all media, film, radio and press, must face with all the vigour at their command.

But this vigour cannot exist in the vacuum of commands of propagandists, however excellent their intentions or forthright their demand for action, if Government policy fails to follow their lead. "One of the most serious indictments" says *The Times*, "which could be brought against those charged with the direction of national affairs is lack of preparation to meet foreseeable and foreseen contingencies." What are these contingencies? Contrary to the belief of the more esoteric of the planners, these contingencies do not relate to a cloud-cuckoo land of communal perfection to be achieved at some unspecified date after the cessation of hostilities. These contingencies are concerned firstly with what is happening now, and *now* means the day on which you read this article not less than it means next week or next month, and also with what will happen immediately and absolutely on the day in which hostilities, in a military sense, cease.

### Melting Pot

Let us take the two points separately. Firstly, what is happening today? If you live in Great Britain or in any of the Dominions of the Commonwealth or in the United States or in China or in the U.S.S.R., you are today a speck in the melting pot of world destiny. You are concerned with immediate events, some apparently trivial and some, even at first glance, world shaking (it depends maybe on the headlines of your breakfast-time newspaper); and of these events you are not merely a spectator but an integral part.

If you are a good citizen of any of these nations, you will instinctively be searching for all the growing points of social progress and active endeavour which are appearing as a direct result of war conditions, i.e. appearing as an ultimate necessity in the battle to beat the Axis. What are these ultimate necessities? The Axis has to be beaten because it represents all the forces of reaction against social progress and against the idea that every man and woman, by right, has a say in his or her own destiny. Nothing can be more significant in this war than the fact that Governments throughout the world have lagged behind the wishes of the people they are supposed to represent in carrying out measures which are not merely designed to win the war quickly, but also to bring about better conditions of life amongst the majority rather than the minority of the people.

Some realisation of this point of view may have been in the mind



of *The Times* leader writer when he said "An enormous and rewarding task of popularisation awaits the propagandist on the home front; well done, it will have a marked effect in renewing confidence in the determination of the Government to garner the fruits of the victory at home as well as in the field. But first of all the Government's endorsement is required. What is as yet only in the stage of reports must be turned into a programme". *The Times* did not turn aside to inquire which Government it refers to, or whether the "endorsement" is to be that of a virtually self-elected House of Commons or that of the people at large; but in any case it does show a stage of enlightenment at which the relationship between the immediate determination to win the war, and the equally immediate determination to win the war in terms of winning the peace, are equated.

That is why it is important that propagandists must stress at all points in their activities those wartime measures which not merely represent an immediate battle-winning weapon, but also a revolution in our social structure and our way of life. That is why the failure of the present Government (presumably under the reactionary influence of the 1922 Committee and of other less obviously reactionary bodies), to undertake anything other than temporary measures of the most superficial nature instead of a direct nationalisation of essential public services, has been regarded by ordinary people as a failure to face up to wartime issues.

### A Decent Future

We repeat once again that the feelings or attitudes of the British people may be also considered to be the feelings of all people in all countries who believe in a decent future.

The second point at issue is the immediate action to be taken on cessation of hostilities. It is now becoming almost too much of a truism that the cessation of hostilities must on no account coincide with the cessation of effort. People are beginning so completely to accept this truism that one can see a million feet being placed on a million desks and a million mouths opening in a gigantic and complacent yawn the moment the bogus pens dipped in invisible ink place the bogus signatures on the ersatz notepaper. It is vitally important to realise that all the propaganda in the world will not avoid factual relaxation the moment armistice is signed if the expression of the people's will through their Governments has not been strong enough to signal a real faith in the future.

The solution to this problem is not entirely to be found in the speeches of Ministers or Presidents. It is not entirely to be found in the reports of Planning Committees. It is only to be found in action. Not merely action as seen in the sticking of however many gratifying bayonets into however many unwilling Axis bellies. It is action in the sphere of the common life of the people, be they soldiers or sailors or airmen or factory workers or housewives or cadets or schoolchildren or research workers or even civil servants. It is action which in its carrying out makes it plain that the terms of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms are not merely words spoken or signatures appended, but ideas translated into fact and action. We ourselves believe that the war cannot be won in a true sense unless these ideas are translated into fact and action; but we are also aware that the war could be won in a military sense without these ideas being taken into consideration. In other words, it is perfectly possible to beat Hitler and Mussolini and Hirohito and grind them into the dust, while at the same time perpetuating all the ideas for which they stand (though of course a different ideology would be used).

Propaganda is therefore at the cross roads. Both in Great Britain and the United States it is stultified because the intentions of Governmental factions which, despite democratic machinery, cannot be truthfully said to represent the intentions of the people, are such that really forthright propaganda is frowned on. This is serious, because it so happens that the intentions of the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and China coincide more and more closely with the intentions of the people of those nations, and it must be noted that today the United Nations depend in great and increasing measure on the strength of China and the U.S.S.R.

The Armistice is signed. The military war has been won. What now? There is an immediate job to be done. The whole of Europe is now the responsibility of the United Nations. The peoples of the occupied countries are very busy killing Germans, Italians and Japanese, either by direct methods or through torture. Typhus and bubonic plague are sweeping westwards from the hinterlands of Asia (you remember how Nansen's organisation only saved us from these at the last second after the last war). Political instability is becoming an increasing and anarchic danger to the victorious powers of the West. How are you, how are we, going to face this problem? We shall not be able to face it if we have not, in the first place, reoriented our own social life and our own faith in active democracy, and in the second place planned, early on, our action as regards immediate post-war policy.

### Previous Planning

Today the Western hemisphere is publicly and acutely conscious of its duty towards the world as regards the supply of food and medical necessities to Europe and Asia immediately hostilities cease. But what about an important matter which should not only go hand in hand with these physical supplies but could also be a powerful factor in ensuring the best use of them? There is a vital job for propaganda to do and it cannot be done without previous planning. The weapons at our command in this respect are the press, the radio and the film, and all of them must be brought into line. If we are not experts in press propaganda or radio propaganda, we know at least as regards radio that we should have control of the wavelengths of the world, and that they should be able to reach everyone with a radio set with messages not merely, God save the mark, of hope, but also of direct moment-to-moment information and instruction.

As far as film is concerned, in Europe and Eurasia alone we, the United Nations, should commandeer every cinema and every projector. With the help of every Disney short to lighten the programmes, we should project to the people constant and consistent programmes of information and instruction. These would in the first place explain in general terms to those millions who have been cut off from direct information by their temporary Axis masters, what exactly has happened and is happening; and secondly, would give them direct instruction and information about the symptoms of epidemic diseases and how to deal with them, the necessary foods to counteract those symptoms of starvation and malnutrition which even as you read this are stunting and deforming the children of Europe and of Asia. There would also be films which would indicate the plans of the victorious peoples not for a vague and cloudy future but for immediate action within the next six months.

### Opinion and Action

The answer is a double one. Basically it is the opinion and action of ordinary people which counts, but the power of propaganda as an active weapon is not merely to strengthen public opinion, but also to help to integrate it where it is incoherent, and to confirm it in well doing.

The publication of the Beveridge Report is a case in point. That it should appear at all is in itself good propaganda and it is heartening to know that the B.B.C. foreign broadcasts have been plugging it very hard. In our own country, despite the thinly disguised activities of anti-Beveridge elements, the Report has meant much more than a social charter specific enough to be within our immediate powers. It has begun that process of definite (as opposed to indefinite or woolly) thinking on the part of ordinary people which is in itself the first weapon of true and active democracy.

To strengthen and confirm this is an immediate job for the propagandists, and as far as films go not merely the Report itself but also its many important implications provide a fertile field for forthright and imaginative work. But there must be no delay, for nowadays time waits for no man, no party, no groups of vested interests and for no Government which does not in fact, as well as in protestation, represent the will of the people.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

## Comic Cuts

WHY IS THERE never any good working-class dialogue in British films? Script-writers always seem to know how the middle and upper classes speak and behave, but they make everybody else either inarticulate and noble or glib and funny. And this applies to both studio and documentary films. The dialogue of Mrs. Miniver's station master was not more untrue to life than the dialogue of most characters one sees on the screen, in post office, factory or pub.

Maybe all our film-makers are incorrigibly middle-class, or perhaps the job of film-making confers middle-classdom on its addicts, or maybe it is that our script-writers really believe that they are writing good honest dialogue all the time. If somebody makes a film about Welsh coal miners they usually take the trouble to keep their ears open roundabout the Rhondda or even if they don't do this they call in Mr. Jack Jones to help. Yet everybody thinks that they can write special "true to life" dialogue for, say, cotton spinners or bus conductors. Of course if the worker is looked at as something remote and strange, it isn't easy. If anybody thinks it is, let him or her sit down and try and write a few lines of dialogue between a bus conductor and a machine-tool maker on the subject of (a) food rationing, (b) Darlan, (c) the successor to Len Harvey; or if this is too complicated, a peace-and-war-time factory girl's reactions to—(a) news of her fiancé's immediate leave, (b) a gift of two pairs of silk stockings, (c) rumours of an invasion.

## Tom Tiddler

THOSE SPOILED darlings of to-day, the Public Relations Officers of the various Ministries, seem to be still busy with their game of Tom Tiddler's Ground—except when they take time off to put their heads in their pinafores and say that they won't play with anybody, so there!

When they play Tom Tiddler it's not so bad. All you have to do is to wait in the long grass and grasp them firmly as they rush past on their many merry missions. The "I won't play with you" game is much more difficult. Their favourite victim seems to be the Ministry of Information Films Division. One moment all is smiles and happy gambols, garlands are exchanged and "my dear fellow" the accepted greeting. Then somebody passes the sugar bowl without the tongs and feelings are very definitely hurt. The doors of the various offices close with ominous quiet and communications are difficult. The next stage is open warfare, blood-fed and sabotage. Communications are now completely broken off, while behind the scenes, those tough and powerful wires, which only operate behind locked doors, are quickly tugged. Meanwhile the world war goes on.

The situation is absurd, the reasons for it often obscure and nearly always completely ridiculous. The job of Public Relations Officer is officially a new one and is no doubt attended by all the difficulties of power which beset any new profession. Spheres have to be determined, and the question of how far each individual officer can go without passing the buck is no doubt only established by slow methods of trial and error. Able men are often apt to think that there is nothing they cannot do and many see no reason for supposing that films are not one of the things they can not only "do", but can do almost while standing on their heads. The Films Division frequently feels otherwise. A state of deadlock is reached and subjects which are of particular interest to any one Ministry often languish and die. After a brief bout of Tom Tiddler the stage of "I won't play" is quickly reached.

There would seem to be room for greater co-operation between the various parties concerned. Who should make the first move is obviously a delicate matter. If it proves too difficult we suggest that some powerful nanny should knock the little dears' heads together.

## Army Training Films

THE PROBLEM of training films in the Armed Forces is apparently not yet satisfactorily solved. We say "apparently" because security reasons make it difficult to get detailed information. It is said that army training films have in recent months shown a marked improvement, although reports reaching us from various people in the Army seem to indicate that some of the earlier stinkers are still in circulation. In any case the real problem seems to centre in the exhibition aspect. A training film shown at the wrong time might just as well not be shown at all. The circumstances of projection naturally rest with the commanding officers of units, and unless they realise that films must be treated seriously, no system of distribution, however efficient, which the Department of Army Kinematography can devise will guarantee proper conditions. We hear of film shows to men who are tired out after a hard day's physical work; of the wrong films being shown to the wrong trainees; of enormously long shows being crammed willy-nilly into a spare morning or afternoon. It is true enough that one always hears about the bad cases and seldom about the good ones. But there seem to be good grounds for believing that many units are not treating training films seriously. Whether D.A.K. has any power to improve this situation we don't know, but it is clear that training films, however excellently produced and efficiently circulated, are quite useless if they are not shown under reasonable conditions and at reasonable times. The problem also, on our information, applies to the Navy and the R.A.F.

## A Job in China

CHINA is a long way away and transport is very difficult. Nevertheless there is great urgency for a long term propaganda campaign on our part in that country. Recent reports indicate that our representatives there have behaved with something less than tact, and that our general record in this war, let alone our specific record as regards China, has put our prestige very low. Fortunately for the United Nations, American action and behaviour is somewhat counterbalancing this state of affairs. Nevertheless we must do all we can to efface the century-old impression of superior behaviour and commercially-minded political action which is likely to die hard in Chungking and elsewhere. Much no doubt can be done by radio. But one big consignment of films specially geared to Chinese needs could be of enormous value. Some of the films should be made, if possible, to the specification of Chinese authorities in this country, and should give information on new techniques in warfare, weapons, medical and surgical practice, and especially on social organisation and activity. Others must state and explain our work in the war, our attitude to the future United Nations set-up, and our determination—as evinced by the joint cancellation of the concession treaties by ourselves and the U.S.—to march by China's side on equal terms in the future. Meantime the very successful release of *Inside Fighting China*—a tribute to China by the Canadian Government—will represent not merely a compliment but will also begin the job of bringing an understanding of China—its people and problems—to the people of this country. This, too, is a job which must be carried on, despite the obvious difficulties of distance and transport.

D.N.L. Nov-Dec.

As time, labour and paper are in increasingly short supply, we have decided to economise by combining the November and December issues. This double number has been increased in size and includes the annual index, but for subscription purposes it will count only as a normal single issue.

# U.S. Dollar Winning Battle to Control British Film Industry

As we forecast in our previous issues, the Film Industry's clash between the representatives of American monopoly capital and British monopoly capital is rapidly coming into the open. Yankee dollar imperialism is on the march and British capital is losing ground in many of its chief industrial strongholds. The Film Industry is no Stalingrad, but it does retain one vital defence against the Americans that few other industries have. It has direct contact and source of revenue from the cash customer. While its production and renting sides would inevitably be taken over by the Americans, the exhibiting side, if it maintains its unity, can still hold out for some time against it and still play off the competing American interests against one another. (An instance of this unified strength was the victory of the exhibitors over 20th. Century Fox in the matter of Sunday bookings. True this was only a temporary victory as film shortage will make the seven or four-day booking a necessity, but nevertheless the spearhead of the American renters will have been blunted.)

Let us examine the situation as we thought it was likely to develop some months ago. We thought the conflict would arise from American interests having the films, and British interests having the cinemas. We thought that unless there was some form of Government action and/or protection, the British Film Production Industry would gradually become a vassal of American renter interests.

What is the position now? It is generally known that the fight is on. The 20th. Century Fox campaign was a fiasco. It is known that heads of American Companies in London have had discussions to get more money out of the English market. Their bosses in America have seen indications in many cinema reports that profits are climbing rapidly. It has been estimated that business is up 35 per cent in the cinemas. On a recent estimate the American Companies already recovered 27 per cent of their booking revenue from this country—they reckon this is their profit. More squeeze on our cinemas means more gravy all round—in the States. We may expect to see other squeezes in the near future. There is the possible revival of block booking already suggested by interested parties in America as a wartime necessity whereby the cinema can be unloaded at inflated prices.

## Buying Cinemas

The American Companies will undoubtedly try to buy up cinemas and form new circuits; Warner Brothers already hold a 50 per cent interest in the A.B.C. circuit. There are already a great many rumours about buying cinemas. The Americans may be a little chary of buying cinemas after their experience in the 1929 days when they were all caught in a theatre operation and many companies virtually bankrupted. But the purchase of cinemas is a tactic they will have to employ. A squeeze they are already

attempting is to take no more flat bookings. This will tend to put the independent exhibitors out of business who, by making a shrewd deal on flat rate, can hope to make a reasonable profit some weeks, whereas on percentage they can never hope to do the same.

What is the focus of our opposition to all this? Rather, it should be *who* is? Because J. Arthur Rank is the person controlling the largest number of cinemas in this country. He controls both the Odeon and G.B. circuits and so is in a position at the moment to pick and choose what films he plays. He is interested in preserving as big a production industry as he can, because this will give him greater bargaining power, so he is deeply committed in Denham Studios, Shepherds Bush and Islington. He also controls General Film Distributors, probably the largest of the English renting concerns. Rank is the protagonist of the British side.

## The Board of Trade

Interestingly enough our Board of Trade does not seem worried about the decline and possible capture of our Industry. Its recent revision of the American Companies' Quota obligations will not encourage the Industry here. They have lowered the Americans' obligation to the requirement that they shall spend £150,000 a year on making British films. Quite obviously we shall see the Americans investing this in one picture per annum produced probably on the lines of *A Yank at Oxford*. The Board of Trade, of course, have not buried the exhibitors' obligation, and by this order they will have even less choice of films to fulfil their quota.

The feature production in this country revolves round a very few names now. There are Two Cities Films, British National Films, Gaumont British, the Archers—operating from Denham Studios, National Studios, Shepherd Bush Studios, Islington Studios, Welwyn Studios, Ealing Studios, Teddington Studios. Of these studios, Teddington and Ealing are already hitched to the Americans. The others represent a relatively small financial interest and could presumably be acquired. The Production Industry will survive so long as Rank and the theatre interests can maintain their bargaining power, because the cinema interests must maintain a minimum Film Industry as a bargaining weapon for itself. The British renting companies will, of course, go under if the British Production Industry is taken over.

Maybe it is a good thing for Anglo-American relations that our Industry should go under American control. On the other hand, there are those who would wish to preserve some machinery for presenting British life and ideas. It would be an odd, but probably likely outcome of this war, to find this important reflection of our national life controlled by American monopoly capital.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 11-12

NOV.-DEC. 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Center, New York.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1

GERRARD 4253

## War and Peace

### The Function of Documentary

At the outbreak of war the film medium was neglected and the claims of those who practised it to assist in the anti-fascist fight were ignored. To-day the documentary film has become the fashionable toy of every official interest.

Propaganda films or instructional films? Endless discussions are everywhere taking place as to the proper wartime rôle of the film of fact. There is agreement on only one point: that you can't have too many films. The civil servant who is not convinced that his work must be recorded on celluloid for the benefit of posterity is a rarity. There is no question of whether the subject-matter he brings is suitable for the medium or whether channels of distribution lie open for the film once it is completed—to have your work filmed is like appearing in the honours list, it is a sure mark of public achievement.

### The Limitations

The time has come for documentary makers to examine not only the powers but also the limitations of the medium they employ. Such an examination will lead to one single incontrovertible conclusion.

The primary function of documentary remains to-day, as always, the furtherance of public enlightenment. The issue between instructional and propaganda films, and the vexed question as to which should principally occupy documentary energies in wartime, becomes a matter of small consequence when each type of film is seen to have the same basic purpose. That is to say, the documentary film to-day is concerned with extending public knowledge of vital issues and, in order to do so, it may equally desirably find itself representing the effect of fascist terror upon French national psychology on the one hand, or in instructing housewives on methods of fuel-saving on the other. Those sponsors or makers of documentary films who show little respect for the educational or instructional films as compared with what they feel to be the more important world of propaganda, reveal a complete failure to grasp the original documentary principle. Documentary in its beginnings, and still to-day, is concerned with public enlightenment, but with public enlightenment in a broader sense of the phrase than is accepted in any other field. For the documentary movement, education has always meant not simply and solely a classroom activity. It broadens out from the pedagogic into every field of civic life. Documentary propaganda has always been concerned with the citizen in relation to his social environment. In to-day's wartime situation, many people have assumed that the purpose of documentary would be basically changed because of the switch-over from peace to war. Why should this be so? The nature of wartime educational and propaganda needs differs from those of peacetime only in detail, not in principle. The nation or groups of nations which will prove victorious is the one which develops the most intelligent and efficient grasp of its problems. In war, as in peace, the rôle of documentary is to convey to the peoples of the United Nations the most thorough grasp

## FILM OF THE MONTH

### "Went the Day Well"

CAVALCANTI, producer of the impeccably exciting film about the Foreman who went to France, has turned director and presents us with the not at all impeccable but equally exciting *Went the Day Well*. The film has all the appearance of having been made with one eye on the clock and the other on a copy of the *Boy's Own Paper*. Perhaps that is why it is such a good film in spite of its faults which are many, frequent and completely unimportant. If you like a film which lingers over its effects, which makes significant detail the turning point of emotion and plot, in fact if you like a film to ponder and remember, this is not for you. But if you believe that it takes all kinds of films to make an evening out and that a rattlin' good yarn admirably turned into celluloid without any

of the war situation and its basic implications. The information to be communicated covers the whole of life. At the one extreme it is a matter of feeling and mood: at the other extreme a matter of physical manipulation. If you like, call the long-term films "propagandist" and the short-term films "instructional". Names do not matter provided you remember that in peace or in war British documentary is always concerned with creating a body of informed, active and therefore good, citizens.

There is, however, one important proviso. In wartime the need is more acute because the issues are more critical and failure more disastrous. For this reason the process of enlightenment must in wartime be accelerated. All relevant matter, including documentary, need to show quicker results.

### Energy Wasted

If it is accepted that the rôle of documentary in wartime is informational in this very broad sense, then it immediately becomes clear that a great deal of documentary energy is being wasted on so-called propaganda films which have less relation to fact than to artificial and synthetic feelings calculated to please the superficial observer here or overseas. Under this head fall all films which are content simply to ascribe to ourselves or our allies all the most desirable virtues without providing any factual basis for such self-righteous assumptions. We must be judged by deeds, not by words, and if we are to impress the world with the righteousness of our cause we will do it best by a factual presentation of achievements which we believe to be in the line of good citizenship.

Many minds are occupied with the transition from war to post-war and its effect upon documentary objectives. Here again there need be, indeed there should be, no basic change. The good citizen in time of war is also the good citizen in time of peace. Implicit in documentary's wartime teachings must be its teachings for the peace to follow, and information, placed in its true perspectives, is the key. To-day, in wartime, education in national citizenship is broadening into education for citizenship in the corporate United Nations. In peacetime it will broaden further still into education for world citizenship. The process is continuous.

frills or decorations is worth going a long way to see, then here is first class entertainment.

A party of Royal Engineers arrive in a rural English village. They are welcomed by one and all, shown round the defences by the local Home Guard and are made much of by the local gentility. But very quickly the villagers' suspicions are aroused, English soldiers don't twist little boys ears (at least, not both at once), we don't make sevens with a bar across the upright, our chocolate does not come from Wien and is not spelt "Chokolade". In spite of the efforts of the local "choking the not impossible plot is out. The Engineers are German fore-runners of a full scale invasion. Their discovery means that plan XYZ has to be put into action. This involves shooting the Home Guard and putting all the villagers into the church where the vicar is immediately shot for trying to ring the bells. The film then settles down to tell how the villagers outwitted the Germans.

### Mounting Suspense

To tell any more of the story would spoil the film for it depends entirely for its effect on quick action and mounting suspense. It keeps you sitting on the edge of your seat and the fact that the whole thing can be torn to pieces doesn't matter in the least. My particular quibble was that if the boy who came from another village to deliver the Sunday papers was as stupid as all that, he wouldn't have been allowed to handle even the "Sunday (censored)". But it didn't spoil my enjoyment of the film at all.

For some strange reason, and this is surely a tribute to its makers, *Went the Day Well* has provoked more differences of opinion than many more important films. Sunday's Darling Goddesses of the film temple have thundered forth from opposite sides and everybody who doesn't like it is quite unable to speak for rage, while those who enjoyed it, and they seem to be in the majority, spend their time telling everybody else to go and see it.

### Camera and Sound

The actors play their parts for all they are worth, I particularly admired Marie Lohr's efficient but fatal handling of the hand grenade and Elizabeth Allan's look of sick but victorious horror when she shot her first German. The camera work was excellent. The sound seemed a bit astray, the dinner party in particular sounding as though the whole thing was taking place in an empty swimming bath, but whether this was recording or reproduction it is difficult to say. And here's a final nag. Why do people have to call films by these literary and impossible-to-remember titles. "Went the Day Well," "This Above All," "All This and Heaven Too." What do these conglomerations of words mean to anybody who hasn't got a Boots' library subscription or a Golden Treasury handy?

And just in case the final quibble has left a marking impression let me repeat that this is a refreshing, an exciting and an excellent film and will be enjoyed by everybody except the hopelessly politically-minded and the most pure of intellectuals.



# A Plan For Post-War Documentary

by Hugh E. Hopewell

THE film, thanks to its omnipresent nature and concreteness of appeal, is undoubtedly one of the most influential factors in the formation of public opinion to-day. It penetrates into every sphere of social life. To labour the insidious effect the story-film has in general exercised is to flog a dead horse. The entertainment film has its own allotted uses. None would deny this; few would maintain that it is not in desperate need of improvement. But documentary, by its very nature, by its dialectic method, is best suited to enlighten the masses as to problems which intimately affect their well-being. The story-film can, and in a few cases does, bring home to the common man an awareness of social injustice of which he was unaware or which he complacently accepted. But, unlike documentary, it can seldom deal with all the issues involved. It can point the moral but seldom show the solution to a problem. On the whole it has confined itself to instilling in its devotees a soul and civilisation destroying ambition to live as life is portrayed on the screen. It has propagated the abandonment of all moral principles. Its tendency has been radically and consistently anti-social. It could do much to solve social problems, but rather than act as an educative force it has preferred to pander to the Lowest Common Denominator.

All that is obvious. Equally obvious is the potency of documentary as an educative force and as a means of propaganda. These two aims are so closely interbound that it is at times almost impossible to define where one begins and the other ends. Mr. Rotha has realised this to the evident benefit of his productions. The label "propaganda" is at present sufficient to damn a film of whatever excellence. The word has been so misused that its true sense has been submerged beneath waves of political preaching. Propaganda should mean not only the dissemination of principles but also the spreading of knowledge to make those tenets understandable. It postulates an increase in education. Now that modern inventions have made propaganda one of the most important factors in the social structure, they should seek to base it on sound knowledge, not on a foundation of hysterical threats and impossible promises. Cinema, documentary cinema, is perhaps the most successful instrument of propaganda. It must strive to keep the educational element well to the fore.

## Prime Producer

To-day, the film has greater potency than most other mediums in the formation of public opinion. Documentary, by its very nature, is the best suited of all cinematic expressions for the awakening of popular consciousness. Granted these premises, the problem at once arises as to who shall use documentary cinema in its task of helping to arouse the peoples of the world

to a realisation of their common responsibilities. It is obvious that under present conditions the State must be the prime producer. National and international planning are State functions. But if all problems are handled by one agency there recurs the fear of a dictatorship of ideas. Such questions, bearing as they do on the welfare of every human being, must be studied from all angles. They must be subjected to a criticism both destructive and constructive. The State must encourage such criticism from its members. It can do so in a variety of ways. For example, in addition to productions outlining Government policies the State should subsidise documentary producers of proved ability and allow them to interpret problems in their own way. For, as Grierson says, "art is wider than political doctrine and platform solution, for the plain good reason that art must more deeply and more lastingly maintain life." Furthermore, documentary should be used by differing political and cultural parties who must receive assurance that their productions shall be given the same facilities and treatment as Government films. On a lesser scale than problems of national and international importance, but equally essential for efficient citizenship, such controversial subjects as Industry, Civics, and Religion should be brought to the attention of the masses by means of documentary. The field of possibilities is almost inexhaustible. So long as one human being remains in ignorance of the work and problems of his brethren there remains a task for documentary.

## Adequate Freedom

The *sine qua non* of good documentary is adequate freedom of expression for those in charge of its production. Documentalists should receive far more than they do under the present social system. For, as Mr. Rotha says, though "the maker of documentary should be politically and socially conscious in his approach to every day experience, he has no claim to the label of politician. His job is not upon a platform to harangue the mob, but in a pulpit to persuade the mass to a wider . . . consideration of human affairs. . . . He does not march with the crowd but goes just ahead, asking contemplation and discussion before action is taken on those problems with which he deals. . . . The immediate task of the documentalists is to find the means whereby he can employ a mastery of his art of public persuasion to put the people and their problems, their labour and their service, before themselves". Under free working conditions documentary will prove its excellence and its integral part in social life. As an efficient public service it will always receive a hearing.

Documentary is, naturally enough, at present largely a Government mouthpiece. If it is to become something more, documentalists, trade journals, film clubs, and all who believe in the cultural value of cinema, must fight for its recognition. Planning for post-war conditions is already going ahead. A campaign must begin

now to secure for documentary its just place in the "new order". Cinema must clearly cease to be merely an instrument of entertainment. If the post-war world is to benefit, the actualities of life must be retained, but ideas which transcend the commonplace must be recognised. Documentary cannot fail to realise this. It must take its facts from one and its appeal from the other. Idealism and realism must amalgamate, not remain diametrically opposed. "So compassion, the great social ferment, will disintegrate the evil elements of the system; while reason, center of differing temperaments, will bind the structure of a new. The cinema will not contribute to the mechanism of the new order; but, by building emotion on the basis of thought, it will speed and ease the transition." That is the work of documentary after the war. It has a great part to play. It must be tried now and not found to be wanting.

## The Newsreels

IT IS AMAZING how the newsreels, all working with the same material, manage to turn out different items on the same subject. Any cinemagoer who may see the same week's issues of two different companies could be pardoned for wondering what really happened at that recorded moment of history. Take the subject "The Allied landing in North Africa" and the three newsreels Paramount, Gaumont British and Pathé. The Paramount reel is completely the master of its history; every incident is under control; each sequence works to its climax and every now and then a diagram appears to make all clear. In fact the whole affair might have been scripted for the benefit of this company. This is good newsreel making. The commentary explains clearly and excitingly everything that happens and even finds time to suggest that Darlan has his drawbacks as an ally.

G.B. news, bringing the Truth to the Free Peoples of the World (which charming phrase immediately conjures up a vision of an earnest Girl Guide bringing a piece of boiled fish to a sick ant) slams right into the subject, tells us how extremely clever we are and how silly Hitler must be feeling and generally has a grand time with sound effects and music. The result is quite stimulating and would have been a sight better if the commentary had not been written in quite such a priggish manner. The obsession with Germany and Hitler rather detracted from our magnificent achievement.

Pathé have by far the best trade mark.

## Poor Material

The material all the companies had to use was on the whole poor. Some good convoy and aircraft carrier material and some excellent shots of the Casablanca section, including some very exciting night fighting. Otherwise the whole thing might have been manoeuvres at Torquay. As the Algerian landing was at any rate a peaceful one, the cameramen concerned might have done a little more than they did. For most people, though, all the reels will be made by the shot of the French jeering at the Italian Armistice Commission as they are driven through the streets. These are very funny and very good.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Speed-up on Stirlings.** *Production:* Shell Film Unit. *Direction:* Graham Tharpe. *Camera:* Sidney Beadle. *Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 20 minutes. Non-T.

*Subject:* The teamwork by which Stirling bombers come to being, and the story of how an increase in production speed was brought about through the ideas and co-operation of both workers and management.

*Treatment:* The film is mostly a straight expositional job, the commentary being spoken by works-foremen, engineers, etc. The assemblage of Stirlings from parts manufactured at sub-factories is clearly shown and there is one magnificent and sensational shot of the fuselage, like some inflated insect out of *The Food of the Gods*, being towed, towering, through a narrow village street. The least successful sequences are the office dialogues, in which the natural actors are not sufficiently natural or sure of themselves. The film also lets you down with a bump by failing to put the completed Stirling in the air; this is a pure psychological error from the point of view of any audience.

*Propaganda Value:* Should be of interest to most audiences and especially to factory workers engaged in manufacturing parts the final use of which they never see. The factual material is engrossing and the scale of operations impressive.

**Trailers.** *Production:* Not stated. M.O.I. 1½ minutes. Theatrical.

The recent trailers put out by the M.O.I. have shown notable progress. They are designed for attaching to the newsreels, and none of the recent issues deserve the drawing of the tabs across them which has from time to time been complained of. The job of these trailers is to put across immediate ad hoc messages (e.g. rubber salvage, pig food, return of toothpaste tubes, etc.). They use all sorts of techniques, including cartoon. The essential for trailers is not only clarity and force in a brief space, but also an unerring sense of timing; and the latest series have been very successful in these respects. If the standard goes on improving audiences will start to be disappointed if the newsreel ends without one.

**Motor Cycle Training.** *Production:* Canadian Army Film Unit. M.O.I. 7 minutes.

*Subject:* The training of Canadian Army motor cycle despatch riders.

*Treatment:* Here's a good subject thrown away by careless and shoddy work. The commentary is badly written, the cutting perfunctory, and cardinal errors are made, such as the introduction of a test hill, already seen *ad nauseam*, in a final sequence which tries very unsuccessfully to depict a rider doing an urgent job under fire.

*Propaganda Value:* In so far as the subject is interesting some audiences may take something away after seeing it. But on the whole this film is an unworthy job for a Dominion which has done pioneer work in propaganda films.

**Spring on the Farm.** *Production:* Greenpark Productions. *Director:* Ralph Keene. *Camera:* Charles Marlborough. *Music:* William Alwyn. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 15 minutes. Non-T. *Subject:* Farmers' and farm-workers' jobs in springtime; also the part played

by the scientist and research worker in modern agriculture.

*Treatment:* This film is more succinct and interesting than *Winter on the Farm*, to which it is a sequel. Keene has retained his marvellous pictorial sense, but has avoided lingering over the beauties of the English landscape *per se*, with the result that much more information is given and a greater sense of the interdependence of the nation, the scientist and agriculture is achieved. The sequences dealing with dairy farmers' problems are especially interesting. The subject also gains a great deal by the constant comparison of the work of big and small farmers.

*Propaganda Value:* Excellent for town audiences and factory workers. Should also be valuable in schools.

**We Sail at Midnight.** *Production:* Crown Film Unit. *Producer:* Ian Dalrymple. *Director:* Julian Spiro. *Camera:* Chick Fowle. *Music:* Richard Addinsell. M.O.I. 27 minutes.

*Subject:* The operation of the Lease-Lend arrangement in terms of the supply of essential tools to a British tank factory.

*Treatment:* This very well made film labours under two difficulties. In the first place its story relates to the period before the U.S. came into the war. In the second place its story is too slender for its length. A new tank has been passed, but cannot go into production until new gear-cutting machinery is obtained from the U.S.A. Priority for this is arranged by the Lease-Lend authorities in Washington. The machines are rushed to the New York docks in lorries, cross the Atlantic in convoy, and arrive safely. It is doubtful whether, today, this tale, among all the other urgencies, is worth more than at most ten minutes. The film is exceedingly pleasant on the eye—the shooting of New York being quite sensational. The dialogue scenes are well directed, notably the War Transport conference and a marvellous sequence of an American works-manager, who deserves a Hollywood contract. A very original musical score by Addinsell gives many of the sequences a lot of value. One wonders, however, whether the subject was worth the expense of sending a unit across the Atlantic instead of having the necessary scenes shot by a U.S. film unit.

*Propaganda Value:* No doubt the film was designed as a compliment to the United States in the pure Lease-Lend period. Today, now that America is in the war, its message is a little faded.

**A House in London.** *Production:* British Paramount News. M.O.I. 8 minutes.

*Subject:* The unveiling of a commemorative tablet on the wall of the London house where Lenin lived from 1902-03.

*Treatment:* Straightforward newsreel technique is used—not unimaginatively. The procession to the house, the unveiling, and Maisky's speech form the material. Quite apart from its intrinsic interest, this film will undoubtedly remind many people how far-reaching have been the political changes of recent years.

*Propaganda Value:* This film was made for showing in the U.S.S.R.—the present version being of secondary importance. For Soviet audiences it is obviously admirable—especially as Goering very kindly blitzed Lenin's house, thus giving an extra

twist to the story. The English version is useful as giving audiences an opportunity to take part in a tribute to one of the world's greatest men. It is also valuable in that it will be gall and wormwood to some of our bigwigs and blimps.

**Street Fighting.** *Production:* Army Film Unit, for M.O.I. 13 minutes. Non-T.

*Subject:* The principles of street fighting as practised by the British Army.

*Treatment:* To illustrate modern Army procedure, an example is chosen in which a platoon is detailed to dislodge a nest of Nazis from a baker's shop in a city street. The story is well told, and the movements of the various sections are clearly detailed—on several occasions by means of a simple and very helpful map. Throughout the film, considerable realism has been aimed at, and this, in general, is achieved. The music, unfortunately, is ill-selected, and is almost an obtrusive parody on the worst type of newsreel background. The camerawork is effective, and many of the angles add to the expositional value of the film.

*Propaganda Value:* This is not an Army training film, but a piece of information to the public at large. As such it has high interest value, as well as a certain amount of excitement. It is also of morale value, since it shows well-trained men carrying out a difficult job with speed, courage and efficiency. If similar films are made in the future, it might be worth the trouble of altering street-signs and posters to an European language such as German, French, or Norwegian. This

(Continued overleaf)

## SIGHT and SOUND

### WINTER ISSUE OUT

#### Some Contributors:

ELSPETH GRANT  
FORSYTH HARDY  
PATRICK MEREDITH

6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS *Continued*

would add an extra element of aggression.

**Wales.** *Production:* Strand Films. *Producer:* Donald Taylor. *Direction:* John Eldridge. *Camera:* Jo Jago. *Commentary:* Dylan Thomas. *Music:* William Alwyn. M.O.I. 12 minutes. Non-T. (available in Welsh and English).

*Subject:* Wales in wartime, and the influence of the Welsh spirit and traditions on life in Wales today.

*Treatment:* This film presumably complements those already made on Scotland and Northern Ireland; it certainly follows the same technique. The cataloguing of information is avoided, and the main points are made by an imaginative use of music and commentary—the latter an impressive effort by Dylan Thomas, with its simple verses about the slump and its aftermath.

*Propaganda Value:* The film should please the Welsh and interest the English and Scots. It leaves no special impression behind, except that Wales is in part a beautiful country and in part an industrial area which had a raw deal in the Twenties and Thirties. But these impressions, if not backed by the memory of detailed information, are probably useful for leavening a non-theatrical show.

**The Nose Has It.** *Production:* Gainsborough Pictures. *Direction:* Val Guest. *Cast:* Arthur Askey. M.O.I. 8 minutes. Theatrical.

*Subject:* Sneezing into your handkerchief.

*Treatment:* The film is an exceedingly funny lecture on sneezing by Arthur Askey, with the main

message punched home by an excellent suspense gag at the end.

*Propaganda Value:* If any film can make the citizenry sneeze into its handkerchiefs this one will. The gags and laughs are very well-devised for putting across the required message.

**Young Farmers.** *Production:* Strand Films. *Direction:* John Eldridge. *Camera:* Jo Jago. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 15 minutes. Non-T.

*Subject:* Young Farmers' Clubs, with special reference to their value in education.

*Treatment:* Shot in the North of England, this film turns a fresh and engaging eye on a town school which has run its own agricultural activities for a year and which is invited to pay a state visit to a countryside Young Farmers' Club. There is plenty of direct dialogue and some pleasant natural acting from children and grown ups alike. Eldridge's almost lyrical approach to children (exemplified in his early film *Village School*) is here seen at its best, for it never drifts off into "artiness." In fact, the story the film sets out to tell comes across very strongly.

*Propaganda Value:* This is an excellent picture for home non-theatrical, and should also be useful, with local re-editing, in overseas countries (especially English-speaking). It is not only good propaganda for Young Farmers' Clubs as attractive and useful organisations; it also gives some sense of that re-discovery of the land which must be a cardinal point in our educational system from now on.

**Coastal Command.** *Production:* Crown Film Unit. *Producer:* Ian Dalrymple. *Direction:* Jack Holmes. *Second Unit Directors:* Ralph Elton, Jack Lee and R. Q. McNaughton.

*Story:* The work of the Coastal Command.

*Treatment:* Many cameras have looked at aeroplanes before but never yet has aerial photography, such as we see in this film, been equalled or surpassed. Such a roaring, a taking off and a flying has not been seen before on the screen. One breath-taking impossible angle close-up is followed by another even more incredible. No film star has ever received the careful attention lavished upon her as have Sunderland and Catalina in their comings and goings. Leaving the water at dawn, coming in over the roof-tops at sunset, scaring the white swans into a movement of mimicry, making the tough Icelandic ponies shy and caper, the aeroplanes dominate the film. If that had been all, how good the film would have been! But of course there was a story to tell and, when the film leaves the machines to tell of the men who fly them, it falters and stumbles.

Using the aggressively penny plain approach the film shows us the work of the men of the Coastal Command in the air and in the control rooms. In a determined attempt to present the truth and nothing but the truth everything is underplayed and everybody is desperately casual. Now this is no doubt true and accurate and exactly how things do happen. But just to take reality and place it, torn from its surrounding life, on to the screen is surely not enough. The audience must be given that extra lift which comes from being on the spot and to do this requires a very great deal of cunning and skill. Life must be falsified to appear true, tempos must be changed and incidents magnified or diminished. Hansard is an excellent work if you want the facts, but a good newspaper report will give you a better idea of what goes on. The routine of a control room may give the impression of a very well run, but oft repeated church service; a man being overcome by fumes while trying to mend one of the petrol tanks, may be only doing his normal work. But it is surely the job of a film to shake the audience up and say to them "these are the sort of things your fellow-countrymen are doing every day. Sit up and take notice".

## Camera's Part

Fortunately the work the different people are doing is made very clear and the work of the Coastal Command, as a whole, both as a defensive and an offensive unit, clearly shown. And, from beginning to end, the camera plays a noble and a saving part.

Vaughan Williams has done a magnificent score, but it suffers from the fact that while it tries to overplay the action, the director is endeavouring to underplay it.

*Propaganda:* In so far as the film gives an excellent picture of what Coastal Command is and what it does, it brings our daily news to life and provides background knowledge of great importance. It won't lift people out of their seats, but it will interest and instruct. We can only hope that the treatment of the human beings will not give the audience an impression that everything in Coastal Command happens more by luck than good judgment.

(Continued on page 156)

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**Kinematograph  
WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2

# Correspondence

Dear Sir,

Although it may be late in the day, I make bold to send you herewith a copy of the statement issued by me as Chairman of the Film Advisory Board to the Government of India in the matter of the serious allegations made against the activities of the Board by Mr. Alexander Shaw, producer to the Government of India 1940-41. (Vide his article in the *Cine Technician*, March-April, 1942.) The statement has already been published in several papers in India.

Of course, I do not presume to pass any judgment on the desirability of the publication of this statement in your valuable paper at the time of your receiving it. For all I know, the subject may have already become stale or the reckless Mr. Shaw may be still indulging in the unhealthy activity of maligning those of us who have closed their ranks and are prepared to fight the menace of Fascism to a finish with the Democratic peoples of the world and their resolute Governments. Anyway, if you think that by publishing this statement you would be helping the great cause we all are serving, you may do so.

As can be made out from the contents of my statement I have attempted to place the ugly and untimely controversy in its proper perspective raising it out of the mire of antiquated nationalistic jargon (which is but one step away from nation's degeneration into Fascism) and viewing it, as it were, in the light of its reactionary effect on more vital issues of the day.

Yours

For Democracy,

J. B. H. WADIA

*Mr. J. B. H. Wadia, Chairman of the Film Advisory Board to the Government of India, has issued the following statement with regard to the remarks made by Mr. Alexander Shaw, Producer of films to the Government of India for 1940-41:*

At a time when the very existence of our Democratic civilisation is being threatened by the forces of Totalitarian reaction we have, surely, more serious things to attend to than the irresponsible invectives of an erstwhile co-worker.

But there is one statement of Mr. Shaw which I, as Chairman of the Film Advisory Board, cannot allow to go unchallenged. To say that the Board was determined that Mr. Shaw's unit should fail is to indulge in reckless thinking, to say the least—more so because he has made this unwarranted and baseless allegation just when India and Great Britain can ill afford to misunderstand each other. Indeed, "this was the most unkindest cut of all." And all that I need say here is this: that the Board, as a self-respecting body of honorary workers, is perfectly capable of dealing with all such misrepresentations; and it will use whatever legitimate means it may choose to see that this gross libel does not go unanswered.

For one thing, the men who formed Mr. Shaw's unit are also working under Mr. Shantaram, our present Producer-in-Charge; and Mr. Shantaram's films to date alone are a sufficient and withering answer to Mr. Shaw's allegations referred to above.

No one should deny Mr. Shaw the right of free speech. After all, it is one of the fundamentals of a political system, which notwith-

standing its imperfections in practice, yet remains to be the most ideal for human welfare and for the preservation of which we are all pledged to fight. But it was certainly uncalled for and, if I may say so, positively un-British on Mr. Shaw's part to have attacked the Board and the Indian film industry after having run five thousand miles away from the scene of battle.

If Mr. Shaw has lost the esteem of his friends in India, he has only to thank himself for it. He may, however, rest assured that the Board is not going to be balked in the pursuit of its urgent task, no matter from which directions the invectives are hurled, no matter for what ulterior motives its sincere War efforts are impeded.

As for the agitation carried on against Mr. Shaw in certain sections of the Indian Press, I wish the arguments were not presented in the rusted formula of black and white. Those of us all over the world who have long since closed our ranks and resolved to march on to a glorious end hand in hand with the progressive peoples and the Governments of the United Nations can ill afford to dabble into politics based on pigmentation. Let us not forget that the inexorable logic of this perspective is applicable as much to the darker-skinned races of the world as to the white-skinned.

13th August, 1942.

Dear Sir,

Oh, the pity of it all. Since arriving in this country from India last December I have read one paper and written three articles about the Indian Film Trade. The paper, to the East Indian Association, was a review of film-making in India and while it was not particularly flattering to all sections of the Indian film business, it said nothing that could not have been said about British films up to about 1930. Of the three articles, one, written for the Film Trade Press, expressed a belief in the future of the Indian film industry, another, for the A.C.T. journal, took a crack at the Indian film bosses for misuse of medium and personnel; and the third article, for this paper, gave a fairly detailed account of some of the pleasures and difficulties of documentary film-making in India. I do not really consider that any of them could be said to be "unhealthily maligning" nor indeed am I a particularly "reckless" person. But I also do not believe that Mr. Wadia thinks any of these things either. Quite apart from the fact that he is a very charming man and was a good personal friend of mine, I am sure that he has the heart of the Indian film trade too much at heart not to agree with many of my criticisms.

As to whether the F.A.B. were or were not determined that I should fail—well, that is another matter. Full co-operation is an intangible quantity and cannot be weighed in paper scales.

To understand his letter and even, indeed, to sympathise with Mr. Wadia, it is necessary to understand the background. The background, not of historical facts, but of seething political unrest, of liking and hatred combined, of the personalities and of the dramatic feuds and squabbles which make up the word *India* to-day. The fact that a European had been called out to assist with film propaganda started the pot simmering. If I had been the only available

expert on any subject in the world (say bridges or social services) and they had had urgent need of me they would still have fought bitterly and to the end on the racial question alone. I have every sympathy with this attitude, battered and bruised though I may have been because of it.

Finally, in reply to Mr. Wadia, I can only say that I believe that one day the film in India will be of the greatest importance, but that will not happen until those in the film business in India who possess vision, have used it to look ahead beyond the squabbles of to-day, to the very different world of tomorrow.

ALEXANDER SHAW

\* \* \*

Dear Sir,

The work of people whose wartime job it is to give information or to do propaganda is often criticised. The work of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, for instance, is sometimes condemned by people who say that a soldier is a soldier and as long as he knows how to deal with the stops on his Lewis Gun or how to repair the inter-com of his tank or whatever else his immediate job may be, that is all that is required of him. It is, therefore, interesting to note that in his recent book, *The Russian Peasant and Other Studies*, Sir John Maynard, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., has, in his notes on the formation of the Red Army, this sentence "Whatever the value of blind discipline may be—and in more modern armies it does not seem to be worth much—instructed and intelligent discipline is better". At a time when every person of any use is engaged in some aspect of the nation's war effort, these words are worth remembering. For although the author is writing of soldiers his words to-day apply to everybody. Discipline of one sort or another is part of everybody's life.

One of the reasons for the fall of France was that obviously nobody knew what anything was about. The triumph of Russia may well be partly due to the fact that everybody has a very good idea of what everything is about. The people of this country have a right to know and this is the propagandist's job.

BELL AND HOWELL JOINER

\* \* \*

## London Scientific Film Society

The first performance was held on Saturday, January 9th, at the Imperial Institute. The theme of the programme was "Civil Defence". For details of the Society apply to the Secretary, 73 High Holborn, W.C.1.

\* \* \*

## Central Film Library 1943

THE M.O.I. has issued free—a catalogue of all films available, without rental, to approved borrowers. The Films are grouped under three heads: *United Kingdom, British Commonwealth, and United Nations*. Each film is described briefly, and there is a classified subject index.

*The Institute of Amateur Cinematographers* announces that their library of amateur, prize-winning and other films offers a wide selection to their U.K. members in 16 mm., 9.5 mm. and 8 mm.



## No. 8

RFU

## THE IGNORANT PHYSICIAN

There was once, in a remote part of the East, a man who was altogether void of knowledge, yet presumed to call himself a Physician. He was so ignorant that he knew not the colic from the dropsy, nor could he distinguish rhubarb from bezoar. He never visited a patient twice; for his first coming always killed him. On the other hand, there was in the same province another Physician, of such art that he cured the most desperate diseases by the virtue of the several herbs of the country, of which he had a perfect knowledge. Now this learned man became blind, and not being able to visit his patients, at length retired into a desert, there to live at his ease. The ignorant Physician no sooner understood that the only man he looked upon with an envious eye was retired out of the way, but he began boldly to display his ignorance under the opinion of manifesting his knowledge. One day the King's daughter fell sick, upon which the wise Physician was sent for; because, that besides he had already served the court, people knew that he was much more able than his pompous successor. The wise Physician being in the Princess's chamber, and understanding the nature of her disease, ordered her to take a certain pill composed of such ingredients as he prescribed. Presently they asked him where the drugs were to be had.

"Formerly," answered the Physician, "I have seen them in such-and-such boxes in the King's cabinet; but what confusion there may have been since among those boxes I know not." Upon this the ignorant Physician pretended that he knew the drugs very well, and that he also knew where to find and how to make use of them. "Go then," said the King, "to my cabinet, and take what is requisite." Away went the ignorant Physician, and fell to searching for the box; but as many of the boxes were alike, and because he knew not the drugs when he saw them, he was not able to find the right ones. He rather chose, in the puzzle of his judgment, to take a box at a venture than to acknowledge his ignorance. But he never considered that they who meddle with what they understand not are likely to repent it: for in the box which he had picked out there was a most deadly poison. Of this he made up the pills, which he caused the Princess to take, who died immediately after; on which the King commanded the foolish Physician to be apprehended and condemned to death.

## REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W.1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

## A Gentlemen's Agreement

The agreement between the producers of advertising films and the Board of Trade has just been announced. It places both producers and exhibitors on their honour. The producers on their honour not to produce advertising films if it entails the use of technicians who might otherwise be engaged on Government propaganda films. It places the exhibitors on their honour not to show advertising films if that showing prevents any Government film from being shown. It is in fact that threadbare compromise: "a gentlemen's agreement". Honour and gentlemen's agreements have never been conspicuously to the fore in business previously, where any question of profit arises. When producers of advertising films can make so much more profit from the production of advertising films, is it unlikely that they will accept commercial contracts? While it would be extremely difficult for even another producer to decide that a unit was insufficiently employed on Government work and able to produce an advertising film, how much more difficult it will be for the Board of Trade to make such a decision. Is it likely that the cinemas will turn down £5 to £20 a week revenue from advertising films in order to show Government films that even now many of them openly denounce as ineffectual. How is the Board of Trade going to check up on any breach of this agreement? It would need an army of inspectors, and even so, the exhibitor with his ready facility for excuses could easily build up stories to show that the Government film was either too short or too long to fit his programme, whereas there was just room for the advertising film.

This "gentlemen's agreement" simply will not do. It is well known in the trade that numbers of advertising films are being made by technicians who are vitally needed for Government and Service work. It is well known in the trade that advertising films have prevented the showing of Government films in the theatres. And now, what is the situation? Both parties—producers and exhibitors—both interested solely in profit, have promised to be good boys! It is said even that advertising films are on the increase. There are many firms that would sooner make films than pay E.P.T.—this is actually used by many advertising film companies in their sales talk. *The Motion Picture Herald*, the American trade paper, contains a report sent from the London office of an international firm of advertising agents stating that since the war they have increased the staff of their film section from six to thirty-three. In America advertising films have been banned and all the competent companies put on Service training work. After three and a half years we lag behind America. It is understood that A.C.T. will watch the position through its members and will draw the attention of the Board of Trade to any infringement. No doubt the M.O.I. will keep a watchful eye on the distribution of its own films. But the practice of advertising films continues, and technicians and film stock, studio space and materials are diverted from the war effort to make profits for individuals.

D.N.L. will be glad to receive any substantiated story from a technician or an exhibitor of any activity that misuses film technicians or prevents the use of screen time for the Government.

## Correspondence (continued)

Dear Sir,

I note from the current issue of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER that you are still pursuing your Campaign of persecution and possible libel in regard to me personally, if not to the National Savings Movement.

When, in November, 1941, you published a very peevish covert attack upon me in the words "the befuddled mind of old advertising larks", I wrote you a letter in response, which I expected to be published. You called me up and asked me to lunch with you. In the course of our talk you tricked me into consenting to your not publishing my letter, the bait being that you would give me space for 1,000 words to talk about our films generally; to set us in the clear with your readers in regard to our activities.

You had persistently before this dealt very wickedly with me in regard to correspondence in your organ about Tom Harrison's theories on Mass Observation and Mr. Ewart Hodgson's reply. You did the unthinkable journalistic thing of submitting my letter in that correspondence to Mr. Harrison, so that in the same issue in which my letter appeared, Mr. Harrison's commentary in terms of studied insult was printed.

You have acted disgustingly throughout in regard to the film products which the National Savings Committee has fostered. You have consistently belittled and degraded the work of such producers as Merton Park Studios, Spectator Films, and others who are not in your coterie. By that I mean the editorial board of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER who are film directors as well, and who have never been given production work by the National Savings Movement. Your wholesale condemnation of our productions, even though they may have been the work of quite eminent Companies and directors, proves to me that you are actuated by spite, spleen and possibly malice.

I don't forget that in the early stages of the War Savings Campaign we were to have some documentary films made by your then directors, Mr. Elton and Mr. Rotha. Circumstances aused us to withdraw these proposed contracts and it would appear, on the face of it, that you have ever since been smarting under that disappointment.

In your current issue you have gone further than ever before in your selective condemnation of the National Savings films. Since I have been in charge of the film production in this organisation since the beginning of the War Savings Campaign I feel that this is a very serious and possibly actionable personal attack; I am consulting my solicitors to see if a way can be found of putting a stop to your wanton and damaging attacks upon work for which I am responsible.

I am going through your back numbers in order to collect all references you have made to National Savings films. If I can find a good one shall include it with the others. I have a very definite view as to your reasons for these attacks, but it will keep for another occasion. I am also raising the attention of the directors and producers of our films to your commentaries. I am sure they will be interested in defending themselves against your gross and almost indecent referential treatment of the work of your own producers and directors.

Yours faithfully,

W. BUCHANAN-TAYLOR

[In December, 1940, D.N.L. published a double page article by Mr. Buchanan-Taylor, based on a speech by him, and drew attention to it in favourable terms in a Note of the Month. In November 1941, a Note of the Month criticised current poster designs, and included National Savings posters in the criticism. It is not our fault if the phrase about "befuddled minds of old advertising larks" was taken by Mr. Taylor as a personal insult; we admire his abilities too much ever to have had any such intention. Mr. Taylor accuses us of an "unthinkable journalistic thing" in publishing one of his letters and a reply to it by Tom Harrison in the same issue. Reference to back files shows that Mr. Taylor's letter appeared in the issue dated February, 1941, and that Mr. Harrison's reply appeared in the issue dated March, 1941. The sentences in our last issue to which Mr. Taylor objects are probably those which appear in an article on M.O.I. films and run as follows:—(1) "We must add, however, that the most recent thirty-two 5-minute films include two National Savings Committee films... These reach as low a level of propaganda as any films yet issued". (2) "... Six productions of the National Savings Committee—a major blot on the whole collection." We may add that in January, 1942, we published a complete article on "National Savings Publicity" by Mr. Taylor in which we gladly allowed him the freedom of our columns to say exactly what he thought about the "old Documentary Marks".

Editorial Board D.N.L.]

### An extract from an article in the "Daily Worker" by Roman Karmen, the Soviet newsreel cameraman.

"We have seen splendid pictures made by gallant English cameramen filming battles in the arid Libyan desert and on the Atlantic Ocean, we have seen newsreels about brave R.A.F. men making death-dealing raids deep behind the enemy's lines. We applauded the work of the heroic cameraman Tom Tanner who filmed the Malta convoy. A while ago we saw a new newsreel about Malta and admired the skill and courage of the cameramen filming the plucky fight of the island's residents, A.A. men, R.A.F. men, and sailors.

"I should very much like to meet you, my friends, cameramen of Great Britain, meet you working and fighting hand in hand with us when the Second Front will at last be opened.

"Then, firmly gripping each other in a handshake, in close creative co-operation, we shall film the final shots and make the great historic film of the decisive battle and victory of freedom-loving progressive mankind."

Among documentary films produced in America during 1942 were Robert Flaherty's *The Lad* produced for the Department of Agriculture and Irving Jacy's *High Over the Borders*, a two-reel film about the flight of birds, prepared jointly for the New York Zoological Society and the National Film Board of Canada,

## Film Societies

The Edinburgh Film Guild which opened its new season in October has arranged to show throughout the season a selection of films which includes: Pudovkin's *General Surov*; *A Musical Story*; *L'Esclave Blanche* and *Ramuntcho*. In addition there will be a number of films which have just become available through the National Film Library and also Cavalcanti's *Film and Reality*. Documentaries to be shown will include *The Harvest Shall Come*, *This is Colour* and some of John Grierson's films made in Canada. In addition to the Sunday performances which will be both afternoon and evening, there will be week-night programmes on 16 mm. illustrating such themes as the Russian Silent Epics, the Film and Science and the Film in the Social scene.

\* \* \*

The Manchester and Salford Film Society arranged to show on December 13th *La Femme du Boulanger*, the film directed by Marcel Pagnol.

\* \* \*

The Film Society of Ayrshire will show at its fourth performance of the season *Unfinished Symphony*, the film supervised by Anthony Asquith and directed by Willy Forst. There will also be shown *Jeepers Creepers*, the Warner Brothers cartoon film, and *Fredlos*. At the fifth performance there will be *The Rich Bride* directed by Pryce.

\* \* \*

The Belfast Film Institute Society arranged to show *We From Kronstadt* at their second repertory show on December 16th. This Society issues a bulletin "The Belfast Film Review" which serves as a guide to the current pictures running at local cinemas. The films selected and described in the Bulletin are those likely to prove of interest to members of the Society.

### British-Soviet Week, Leicester

Sponsored by the City of Leicester Municipal Libraries, four film programmes were shown during this week. The films which were obtained from the Central Film Library and the Soviet War Film Agency covered the following subjects: Russia at war, Culture, Education and Industry. There were speakers at each of the programmes. In connection with this week a film show was arranged for medical and scientific workers and also the city's cinemas showed films relating to the Soviet Union, among them *Soviet School Child*, *Strong Point 42*, and *November Celebrations*, 1941.

### B.F.I. Pamphlet

IN RESPONSE to enquiries on the subject of Film Appreciation, the British Film Institute has published a pamphlet for the use of Discussion Groups and Schools.

The pamphlet suggests that the three main approaches to a critical standpoint are: (1) The History of the Cinema; (2) How a Film is made in the Studio; (3) The Internal Structure of a Film. The main sub-divisions of the last-named are The Use of the Camera, Film Editing, The Use of Sound, The Narrative Structure and Ancillary Arts and Crafts.

Each section of the pamphlet contains a short bibliography from which the information which has been given can be amplified.

*New Documentary Films—continued*

**Control Room.** Shell Film Unit. *Director:* Geoffrey Bell. *Assistant:* Lionel Cole. *Camera:* Sidney Beadle. *Diagrams:* Francis Rodker. *Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 22 minutes. *Subject:* The organisation of A.R.P. in a big city during a raid.

*Treatment:* During an actual raid it is difficult to realise that an entire organisation has gone into action on the ground. At most the onlooker sees isolated sections of a work which appears quite unrelated to anything but the job in hand. But of course each rescue squad, fire engine or warden is only part of a gigantic system which is running smoothly and efficiently. Shell's special flair for clear and dramatic exposition is brilliantly shown in this film of behind the scenes of the Bristol A.R.P. during an intensive raid. A bomb falls, a fire is started, the detailed message goes to the control room and action is taken. But bombs are falling all over the place and obviously all these counter actions must be co-ordinated. So we follow the messages on to the central control and see the way in which whole squads of people and machines are moved about the city as danger threatens first one district and then another. Eventually the central control is put out of action but its work is immediately taken up by an emergency group who have been standing by. At one point extra help is sent for from another city. The story is told excitingly and well, but suffers a little from too great a determination to make all understandable and clear. This determination is grimly held to by the commentator who is inclined to plod along rather relentlessly. It is perhaps almost impossible for an untrained commentator to carry two reels unless there is some special, attention-holding reason for his doing so.

*Propaganda value:* This can scarcely be called a topical film, yet there is every reason to suppose that coming events may be waiting for it, and then its value will be very great indeed. If everybody can be shown that during a raid they are not really alone and that there is a powerful and efficient machine ready to come to their rescue, then a very great morale job will have been accomplished.

**Battle of Supplies.** The Strand Film Co. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Supervising Editor:* Alan Osbiston. *Editor:* H. A. Oswald. *Diagrams:* J. F. Horrabin. *Musical Direction:* Muir Mathieson. *Music:* V. Hely Hutchinson. M.O.I. 20 minutes. *Treatment:* Constantly racing against time and history the makers of these films on strategic subjects fight a losing battle. The way in which these films have to be produced makes it almost certain that they will be out-of-date before they are even half finished. Compilations of library material, present problems compared with which a straight shooting job is mere child's play. It is therefore all the more creditable that *Battle of Supplies* should be so up-to-date. The material is well chosen and extremely well put together. The films tells of the extreme importance of lines of supply, explains that the United Nations lines are more difficult than the Axis ones to keep up and by means of diagrams (very good ones) explains the whole problem clearly and concisely. An excellent job; the only criticism of which is that occasionally the visuals stray rather far from the commentary.

*Propaganda value:* The wider problems of war strategy are not always easy to disentangle from the news. This film sets one problem clearly and dramatically before the audience.

## THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF

# "BRAINS TRUST"

THREE-REELERS  
WILL SHORTLY  
BE SHOWN TO  
THE TRADE AND  
PRESS.

---

NUMBER TWO OF  
THE SERIES HAS  
ALSO BEEN COM-  
PLETED.

NUMBER THREE  
IS SHORTLY  
GOING INTO  
PRODUCTION.

---

## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.  
NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE





Men of Africa, 135  
Merchant Seamen, 34, 64, 68  
Metal Working Lathe, The, 7  
Middle East, The, 70\*, 82, 135  
Miss Grant Goes to the Door, 135  
Moana of the South Seas, 40  
Mobile Engineers, 71\*, 135  
Modern India, 9  
More Eggs from Your Hens, 21\*  
Motor Cycle Training, 151\*  
Mr. Borland Thinks Again, 135  
Mr. Pinpernel Smith, 67  
Mrs. Miniver, 112\*  
Murderer Steps Out, The, 63  
Nanook of the North, 27, 40  
National Fire Service Mobilising Procedure, 125\*  
Naval Operations, 5\*, 70, 85  
Nazi Rule, 9  
Neighbours under Fire, 135  
New Fire Bomb, A, 122, 125\*, 135  
Newfoundland at War, 119  
Newspaper Train, 37\*  
New Spirit, The, 60  
New Teacher, The, 67, 69\*  
New Towns for Old, 90\*, 125, 135  
New Weapons, 9  
Nerv of Kin, 66  
Night Mail, 40, 56, 64  
Night Shift, 135  
Nitro-Ko, 43  
Northern Outpost, 135  
North Sea, 41, 64, 68  
Nose Has It, The, 135, 152\*  
November Celebrations, 155

Nutrition Film, The, 57  
Old Manor, The, 41  
100,000,000 Women, 59  
One Night in Lisbon, 67  
One of our Aircraft is Missing, 66, 67, 80  
Our Air Force, 9  
Our Film, 63\*  
Our Navy, 9  
Our Russian Allies, 43  
Our Russian Front, 60  
Out of the Night, 29  
Owl Bob, 64  
Owner Goes Afloat, The, 15, 58, 135  
Partners in Crime, 135  
Pays du Sculpt, 40  
Peoples of Canada, 87  
Pilot is Safe, The, 64  
"Pinpernel Smith", See Mr. Pinpernel Smith  
Plain Turning, 7  
Plastic Surgery, 135  
Plow That Broke The Plains, The, 27, 126  
Poland's New Front, 119  
Potomkin, 41, 64  
Power and the Land, 135  
Private Life of Henry VIII, The, 121  
Railway Workshops, 9  
Red Army, The, 3  
"Rehabilitation", See: They Live Again  
Rich Bride, The, 69  
Rien que Les Heures, 40  
Right Man, The, 100\*, 124  
River, The, 27, 64, 126

Safeguarding Military Secrets, 60  
Sam Pepsy Joins the Navy, 15  
Savings Song, The, 15  
Seaman Frank Goes Back to Sea, 15, 21\*  
Seamen of India, 9  
Self-Defence by Plants, 64  
Sergeant York, 67  
Seven Brave, The, 69  
Ships with Wings, 67  
Shppard, 41  
Shury, 7\*, 69  
Shoulder Arms, 115  
Sins of War, 43  
Song of Ceylon, 64  
Song of the Clyde, 21\*  
Soviet Schoolchild, 135, 155  
Sowing and Planting, 6\*  
Spanish Earth, The, 41  
Speed-up on Strifelines, 135, 151\*  
Spring on the Farm, 135, 151\*  
Squadron 922, 98  
Start a Land Club, 100\*  
Storing Vegetables Indoors, 71\*  
Storing Vegetables Outdoors, 71\*  
Strategies of Metals, The, 2, 72  
Street Fighting, 135, 151\*  
Strong Point, 42, 155  
Sweet Story, A, 129

This Day Saved the World, 119, 124  
This is Blitz, 72  
This is Colour, 71\*  
They Also Serve, 47  
They Keep the Wheels Turning, 113\*  
They Live Again, 125  
They Met in London, 5\*  
They Speak for Themselves, 113\*  
Three in a Shell Hole, 5\*, 29, 43, 44  
Thunder over Mexico, 64  
Tools for the Job, See: The Handyman  
Towards India's Defence, 9  
[Trailers], 151\*  
Transfer of Power, 41, 46, 57  
Troopship, 100\*, 135  
Turkish, 41  
Turn of the Tide, The, 64  
Twelve Days, 113\*  
21 Miles, 113\*, 124, 135  
Uncensored, 129  
United Nations, The, 113\*  
V for Victory, 9  
Via Imperial, 55\*  
Victory in the West, 27  
Volunteer Worker, The, 15  
Voyage au Congo, 40  
Wales, 152\*  
War and Order, 135  
War Clouds in the Pacific, 73, 85  
War in the East, 5\*, 17, 18  
War is Hell, 56  
Warime Factory, 9  
Water, 95\*

## FIVE-MINUTE FILMS

### For AUGUST-NOVEMBER, 1942

Title	Theme	Director	Production Unit	Release Date
ESSENTIAL JOBS	Stick to your job even if it seems unimportant	John Page	Paul Rotha Prods.	3/8
FREE HOUSE	Allied Navies	Henry Cass	Verity	10/8
EMPIRE AID	Appeal for Lord Mayor's Empire Distress Fund	—	Movietone	17/8
TWENTY-ONE MILES	Dover front line re-visited	(Harry Watt)	A.F.U.	24/8
*THE DAY THAT SAVED THE WORLD	The Battle of Britain	—	Crown	31/8
†CHIANG KAI SHEK IN INDIA	China and the United Nations	—	Indian Film Unit	7/9
A NEW FIRE BOMB	Instructions for fighting explosive incendiaries	Napier Bell	Shell Film Unit	14/9
THE NOSE HAS IT	Don't sneeze	Val Guest	Gainsborough	21/9
ASK C.A.B.	Use your Citizens' Advice Bureau	Henry Cass	Verity	28/9
‡DUSTBIN PARADE	Salvage	Halas-Batchelor	Realist	5/10
MOTOR CYCLE TRAINING	Canadian Army gets ready	(Lt. McDougall)	Canadian A.F.U.	12/10
*VIA PERSIA	Route to Russia	—	A.F.U.	19/10
AMERICA MOVES HER JAPS	Japanese relocation	—	Office of War Information (U.S.A.)	26/10
*THE GREAT HARVEST	Agriculture in 1942	—	Paul Rotha Prods.	2/11

\* Library compilation by Jack Chambers. † Original title: **Our Gallant Neighbour**. Recommended. ‡ Cartoon.

Wavel's 30,000, 34, 37\*  
Way to Plough, A, 54\*  
Wax, The Waxed Words, 41  
Went the Day Well? With, 41  
We Sail at Midnight, 151\*  
Western Isles, 130\*

We've Got to Get Rid of the Rats, 135  
When Air Raids Strike, 53  
When The Pie Was Opened, 64  
White Hell of Pitts Point, The, 64  
Whites of the Contaminant, 87  
Winter on the Farm, 307, 151  
Women Away from Home, 119

Women in Defence, 60  
Women in the Air Service, 121  
Women of India, 9  
Wood for War, 37\*  
Worker and Warlord, No. 2, 95\*  
Words Partly, 95\*, 124, 135  
World at War, The, 126

W.R.N.S., 59  
W.V.S., 47\*, 18, 59, 135  
Yank at Oxford, A, 148  
You'll Never Get Rich, 80  
Young Farmers, 152\*  
Youth Takes a Hand, 135

#### (4) NAMES OF PEOPLE

*Names printed in the Catalogue of M.O.I. films (pp. 74, 75, 135-142) are omitted. Series, articles, letters and reviews are indicated by an asterisk.*  
Addisnell, Richard, 71, 100, 151  
Alexander, Donald, 4, 21  
Alexander, King, 40  
Allan, Elizabeth, 149  
Allwood, Marc, 40  
Alwyn, William, 4, 37, 68, 90, 100, 105\*, 151, 152  
Amery, 25, 133  
Anderson, Max, 68  
Anstey, Edgar, 5, 21, 37, 70, 86, 90, 100, 125, 151, 152, 156  
Antoinette, Marie, 104  
Archibald, George, 122, 127  
Atkes, Leslie, 58  
Arnell, Richard, 27  
Arthur, Jean, 122  
Asker, Robert, 117  
Asquith, Anthony, 26, 43, 61, 93, 155  
Astor, Lady, 97  
Atlee, Clem, 113  
Austen, Jane, 117  
Azad, 51

Baddeley, V. C. C., 98  
Baird, J., 20  
Baker, George, 15  
Balcon, M., 58  
Banks, Leslie, 15  
Banting, John, 125  
Barlow, Roger, 20\*  
Barr, Robert, 117  
Barrie, J. M., 117  
Beadie, Sidney, 21, 90, 151, 156  
Beaton, Cecil, 104  
Beaumont, C., 37  
Beaverbrook, Lord, 43, 55  
Beddingford, J. A., 84, 85  
Beethoven, 7  
Beeton, Mrs., 131  
Begg, John, 119  
Beldon, Eileen, 68  
Belfrage, Geoffrey, 21, 89\*, 156  
Bell, Paul, 125, 158  
Bell, Oliver, 52\*, 61, 93  
"Bell & Howell Joiner," 155  
Benchley, Robert, 13  
Benedita, Mary, 113  
Benes, Dr., 7  
Bernays, E. L., 53  
Bernhardt, Sarah, 41  
Beveridge, J., 20  
Beveridge, Sir W., 146  
Bingham, A. W., 93  
Bird, Louise, 4  
Bishop, T., 21, 37, 116  
Black, 55  
Black, J. H., 130  
Blaise, W. H., 101  
Blewitt, W., 58  
Boddy, Jimaraja, 20, 25  
Bond, Ralph, 5, 37, 63\*  
Bond, Raymond, Roy, 23  
Boo, Sidney, 54  
Boyer, Charles, 61, 122  
Bracken, Brendan, 99, 124, 125  
Brugal, 1  
Briggs, James, 117  
Brison, D. G., 117  
Brilliant, Freda, 21  
Britton, Benjamin, 128  
Broadhead, Col., 66  
Brown, Maurice, 117  
Brown, Bernard, 71  
Buchanan, Andrew, 100, 116  
Buchanan, Donald W., 87\*  
Buchanan, Donald W., 151\*, 155\*  
Bunuel, Louis, 40  
Butler, Richard, 13

Chirkov, Boris, 69  
Chittam, 37  
Churchill, Winston, 19, 34, 65, 84, 133  
Clavering, Sir A., 15  
Closs, Archibald, 117  
Clow, Nan, 11, 115  
Cockburn, F., 54  
Cohbert, Claudette, 122  
Cole, Lionel, 15  
Compton, Fay, 117  
Conner, W., 30  
Cooke, Alastair, 128  
Cooper, Budge, 100  
Cooper, Duff, 135  
Cooper, Gary, 67  
Cooper, Wilkie, 58  
Cordwell, R., 44\*  
Corwin, 128  
Coster, Ian, 125  
Coward, Noel, 143, 144  
Crawley, Budge, 20  
Cripps, Sir S., 19, 34, 51, 133  
Crisp, Donald, 29  
Crosby, Bying, 122  
Cross, 61  
Crowther, Bosley, 39\*, 53\*  
Cummins, G. T., 125  
Cummins, Sylvia, 113  
Curthoys, J. L., 21

Dalton, Dr., 109  
Darlington, L., 37, 151, 152  
Darling, Admiral, 145, 147  
Darrow, Wayne, 10  
Davidson, J. D., 20  
Davis, Betty, 122  
Davis, Elmer, 126, 127  
Defoe, Daniel, 50, 117  
de Gaulle, Gen., 36  
DeLafayette, E. M., 104  
de Lator, C., 125  
De La War, Lord, 11  
de Mayne, Derek, 5, 21, 26, 70  
de Marne, Terence, 15, 21  
de Mille, Cecil B., 16  
de Mille, W., 41  
Dennington, M., 21  
Dickenson, Desmond, 55, 125  
Dietele, W., 41  
Dietrich, Marlene, 122  
Disdale, A. T., 113  
Disney, Walt, 7, 15, 15, 55  
Donat, Robert, 104  
Donovan, W., 119  
Douglas, John, 113  
Duzovenko, A., 7, 69, 121  
Dreyfus, 41  
Duff, Lillian, 98  
Dunlop, Dr., 11  
Dunn, Philip, 127  
Durst, John, 54  
Dyall, Valentine, 71  
Dyball, 69  
Eiden, Anthony, 5  
Eisenstein, S., 41, 56, 63, 69, 115, 121  
Eskelich, Y., 7  
Eldridge, John, 55, 90, 116, 152  
Ellitt, Jack, 6, 7  
Elton, Arthur, 84, 101, 115, 155  
Elton, Ralph, 152  
Elton, Raymond, 125  
Ermer, F., 69  
Esdale, Brian, 37  
Evans, Clifford, 58  
Factor, Max, 71  
Faithful, Geoffrey, 4  
Farquhar, Herbert, 104, 105  
Fein, K., 61, 62  
Ferno, John, 103, 129  
Field, Mary, 36, 95  
Fielding, Marjorie, 71  
Figgis, W. C., 7  
"Filmgoer," 87  
Flaherty, Robert, 2, 10, 22, 27, 40, 60, 65, 83, 103  
Ford, John, 29, 39, 69, 127  
Ford, Maurice, 82  
Fords, Walter, 7, 116  
Forst, Willy, 155  
"Four-Way," 115\*  
Fox, Charles, 104  
Fowle, H. E., 37, 151  
Frankau, Gilbert, 15  
Fraser, Dun, 20  
Freeman, H. W., 68  
Friedlander, E., 130  
Fround, Charles, 58  
Gabin, Jean, 122  
Gable, Clark, 122  
Garbo, Greta, 122

Halas-Batchelor, 158  
Hale, Georgia, 71  
Harding, J., 5  
Hardy, Forsyth, 43  
Hardy, Thomas, 122  
Harrison, Francis, 53  
Harrison, A. E., 104  
Harrison, Tom, 155  
Harvey, Len, 147  
Harvey, Walter, 113  
Hawes, S., 20, 129  
"Haw-haw," 110  
Hawley, Adelaide, 60  
Hay, Roy, 6, 71  
Hay, Will, 70  
Hennessey, Peter, 100  
Henry VIII, 107  
Hepburn, Katherine, 60  
Hess, R., 84  
Hickey, W., 18  
Hiller, E., 90  
Hilton, John, 54  
Hinz, Gerhard, 21  
Hirohito, 146  
Hitchcock, Alfred, 25, 43, 57  
Hitler, A., 5, 20, 50, 54, 55, 78, 84, 106, 135, 145, 150  
Hodgson, Ewart, 155  
Holmes, Jack, 152  
Hopkin, 61  
Hopewell, E., 150\*  
Hornby, C., 55  
Horton, R. J., 156  
Houston, Lady, 34  
Houston, Lady, 128  
Hutchinson, Hely, 156  
Hurley, Aldous, 115  
Hunt, Dr. Julian, 5, 76  
Hulton, Jack, 15  
Ivens, Joris, 78, 103, 129  
Jackson, Gordon, 58  
Jackson, P., 54  
Jacoby, Irving, 100\*, 129  
Jago, Jo, 90, 100, 152  
Jenkins, A. E., 37, 68, 71, 95, 100  
Jefferson, 10  
Jeffery, 28  
Jinnah, 51  
Joad, Prof., 11  
Jones, Dr., 40  
Jones, Jack, 147  
Jones, J. G., 117  
Kabulevsky, A., 7  
Kamin, S., 103  
Karmen, Roman, 155\*  
Keene, R., 90, 151  
Kellum, Roy, 61  
Kensley, Lord, 43  
Keynes, Maynard, 15  
Kimberley, Paul  
Klatzow, Dr., 101  
Kozmisk, 43, 69  
Kuleshov, L., 63  
Lash, 83  
Laskier, Frank, 15, 21  
Laundner, Frank, 116

Laurel, Stan, 122  
Laurence, L., 125  
Laval, 77  
Lee, Jack, 152  
Legg, Stuart, 2, 20, 38, 53, 72, 73, 83, 103, 129  
Leigh, Walter, 98, 105  
Lejeune, C. A., 90  
Lenin, V. I., 99, 106, 151  
Leonov, Leonov, 5  
Lermontov, 45  
Lerner, 103  
Leslie, S. C., 15  
Lewis, Jay, 26  
Lincoln, Abraham, 130  
Lindgren, Ernest, 50, 56\*, 57  
Lindsay, Sir H., 18  
Lippman, Walter, 39  
Litvinov, 17  
Lohr, Maria, 99  
Lonsdale, Lord, 55  
Lord, Russell, 10, 27  
Lorenz, Fritz, 10, 13, 127, 126  
Losey, Mary, 60\*  
Love, Bessie, 70  
Lovell, Raymond, 104  
Low, 117  
Loy, Myrna, 122, 131  
Lubitch, 106, 115  
Ludendorff, 39  
Luff, A. H., 70  
Lynn, Len, 20, 26, 37, 43, 78, 95, 116  
Lynn, Vera, 117  
Maisky, S., 151  
McCulloch, D., 11  
McDonald, Malcolm, 84  
McDougal, Capt., 158  
McDougal, J. E. R., 37  
McGowan, Kenneth, 127  
Macquart, 69  
Machene, Scobie, 98  
MacLaren, Norman, 20, 43, 129  
McLean, Ross, 83  
McLeod, J., 37, 71  
McNaughton, R. O., 37, 152  
MacPherson, Louis, 117  
MacPhail, Angus, 58, 70  
Maddison, John, 36, 130  
Makara, Tamara, 69  
Mallory, Miles, 113  
Malandine, 23  
Mander, Mack, 90, 125  
Manney, Pat, 61, 93  
Mansell, End, 113  
Manvell, Edith, 47\*, 59\*, 79\*  
Marcon, 55  
Marey, Dr., 40  
Mariborough, C., 5, 37, 55, 125, 151  
Marshall, F., 26  
Marshall, H. P., 3, 93  
Marx Bros., 13, 61  
Masani, Mimoo, 22  
Massey, Raymond, 130  
Matheson, Muir, 156  
Masingham, R., 43, 61, 130  
Mayakovsky, 42  
Mayer, Carl, 13, 43  
Maynard, Sir J., 155  
Mayo, Archie, 106  
Melies, G., 41  
Mellet, Lowell, 39, 53, 114, 126  
Meyer, Ernst, 37, 55, 95  
Mikschke, F. Q., 73  
Miles, R. S., 64\*  
Millar, Catharine, 21, 113  
Mir, Ezra, 25, 116, 125  
Mitchell, Leslie, 70  
Mitchell, R. J., 128  
Mittra, 25  
Moss, Tom, 41  
Moffatt, Ivan, 100, 116  
Monck, John, 37  
Monckton, Sir W., 35  
Montagu, Ivor, 29\*, 43, 44, 61, 93  
Morgan, Dana, 70  
Morganthau, 73  
Morley, Robert, 58, 104  
Morrison, Herbert, 50  
Moult, Merrill, 37  
Munden, Max, 54  
Murray, Ed., 113, 128  
Musk, Cecil, 113  
Mussolini, B., 77, 146  
Mutanov, E., 26  
Nansen, 146  
Napoleon, 140  
Naylor, R. H., 2  
Neale, R., 143  
Nehru, 25, 51  
Nietter, H., 113  
Nelson, A. J., 44\*

Nelson, Lord, 104  
Noble, George, 37  
Nuffield, Lord, 117

Oliver, Prof. R. A. C., 61  
Orr, Sir John, 3  
Osborn, A., 125, 156  
Oswald, H. A., 136

Pabst, 22  
Page, John, 21, 26, 55, 113, 158

Pagnoli, Marcel, 155  
Pal, G., 22, 130

Palmer, E., 70  
Parker, Jack, 6, 95

Parmer, Prapat, 25, 70  
Pearle, Bert, 95

Pearson, George, 61, 93  
Pennington-Richards, 54  
Perkins, Milo, 10

Pickles, W., 37  
Pigs, Commr., 26  
Pitt, 104

Plant, Prof., 66  
Ploverman, G., 4

Poirier, 40  
Ponting, 40

Ponford, G., 15  
Potter, Stephen, 117  
Powell, Michael, 43, 67

Powell, William, 122  
Poynter, A., 126  
Pritchett, V. S., 113, 117

Protazov, 43  
Pudovkin, 22, 43, 56, 63, 69, 121, 131, 155  
Purcell, H., 15

Puskin, 45  
Pyrie, 155

Radford, Basil, 70  
Ramsden, Jack, 23

Rank, J. A., 148  
Rau, Premila Rama, 25  
Rawnsley, David, 143  
Reading, Lady, 4

Reed, Carol, 25, 104  
Reeves, J., 61, 93

Renoir, J., 13, 22, 69  
"Rewinder", 120\*

Reynolds, Dr. R., 56  
Ridley, George, 61  
Rignold, H., 23

Riley, R., 54  
Rilla, Walter, 117  
Rinkin, R., 126

Rockefeller, Nelson, 127  
Rodakiewicz, 103  
Roder, Francis, 5, 70, 156

Rodwell, S., 113  
Rogers, Rogers, 122  
Rogers, J., 21

Rommel, Gen., 17  
Roosevelt, President, 19, 39, 99, 114  
Rose, 117

Ross, Harry, 21  
Rotha, Paul, 5, 13, 22, 41, 43, 55, 83, 101,  
113, 150, 155

Rowson, S., 66  
Ruttman, Walter, 40

Sainsbury, Frank, 43\*, 100, 116  
Satterfield, Paul, 7

Saville, Victor, 43  
Sawyer, Joe, 58  
Schacht, Dr., 73

Schneider, E., 70  
Scott, 40, 55  
Scott, Joan, 15, 116

Scott, Peter, 125  
Searle, F., 26, 113  
Seidman, Joe, 110

Seligman, Victor, 45\*  
Shabalin, L., 69  
Shakespeare, W., 56

Shantrian, 155  
Shaw, Alexander, 2, 22, 24\*, 36, 55, 70,  
12, 90, 100, 125, 130, 153\*

Sheridan, 104  
Sherwood, R., 126  
Singh, Gian, 25

Sitwell, Edith, 27

Skaravot, L., 7  
Slater, John, 68

Slesinger, Donald, 20\*  
Smith, Percy, 56, 95  
Sokhy, Colonel, 25

Spewack, Sam, 126  
Spice, Evelyn, 129  
Spiro, Julien, 151

Spottiswoode, R., 20, 129  
Stalin, 19, 35, 69, 106  
Stanwyck, Barbara, 122

Steiner, R., 103  
Stillier, M., 41  
Stodier, Major, 8

Storm, Leslie, 18  
Strasser, Alex., 130  
Strauss, Theodore, 10\*, 38\*

Stravinski, I., 27  
Struther, Jan, 112  
Suart, John, 119\*

Sturges, Preston, 106, 131  
Sullivan, Margaret, 122  
Swift, 50

Tallents, Sir S., 86  
Taileyrand, 104  
Tanner, Tom, 155

Tasto, Charles, 37, 104, 113  
Tata, Sir Jamsheer, 25  
Taylor, Donald, 71, 152

Taylor, John, 100  
Tharr, Graham, 5, 26, 71, 116, 151  
Thomas, Dylan, 70, 50, 100, 125, 152

Thompson, Graham, 21  
Thompson, Margaret, 71  
Thomson, Charles A., 119

Thurtle, E., 99  
Toktoy, Alexei, 63  
Traubner, 43, 69

Tricardas, P., 24  
Trinder, Tommy, 58  
Turner, Lana, 122

Unsworth, G., 54  
Urban, Charles, 56

Van Dongen, Helen, 10, 27  
Van Dyke, Willard, 20, 43, 103  
Victoria, Queen, 104

Vigo, J., 13, 43  
Volkov, Pavel, 69

Wadia, J. B. H., 153\*  
Waithman, R., 71\*

Wallace, H. A., 77\*, 99  
Wallace, Vice-President, 85  
Walling, R., 23

Warner, Rex, 113  
Washington, George, 10  
Watt, Harry, 23\*, 43, 56, 73, 158

Wavell, Gen., 19, 37  
Wavrin, 40  
Wellington Koo, Dr., 5

Wells, H. G., 5  
Welsh, Mary, 4  
Wesely, Paula, 13

Wightman, R., 90  
Wilberforce, 104  
Wilkins, Leo, 113

Willard, Edmund, 68, 70  
Williams, Vaughan, 152  
Wilts, Colin, 37

Wilson, T. F., 101  
Winant, W., 5  
Woolf, C. M., 110

Woolfe, Bruce, 56, 110  
Woolfe, Virginia, 115  
Wright, Basil, 13, 40\*, 43, 50, 56, 57\*, 58,

68, 70, 71, 93, 156  
Wright, Irene, 119  
Wright, S. J., 54

Wyler, William, 112, 127, 131  
Yakovlev, V., 69  
Yaroslavsky, 106\*

Zanuck, Daryl, 8, 29, 127  
Zecca, F., 41  
Zinnemann, F., 43

# NEW FILMS NOW AVAILABLE

35 mm. and 16 mm. SOUND.

## IRAN

### "Exploring for Oil"

13 MINUTES

A detailed description of the search for oil in IRAN, showing the parts played by the geologist and geophysicist.

## INDIA

### "Tins for India"

8 MINUTES

After the kerosene tin has fulfilled the work for which it was made, it commences a long and arduous life of service in rural India.

### "Drilling for Oil"

24 MINUTES

The erection of a Drilling Rig and Drilling an Oil Well in IRAN.

### "The Pipeline and Crude Oil Storage"

8 MINUTES

A description of the 140-mile Pipeline, from the oilfields of IRAN to the Refinery Storage Tanks on the coast.

## U.S.A.

### "Pipeline"

13 MINUTES

The story, told by a Texan, of the construction of an Oil Pipeline, from Fall River to Boston in the U.S.A.

16 mm. SILENT—

"Principles of Distillation" 8 minutes.

"Distillation of Petroleum" 8 minutes

## PETROLEUM FILMS BUREAU

Please Note New Address: 46 ST. JAMES'S PLACE, ST. JAMES'S STREET, S.W.1

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

## CONTENTS

IT WON'T BE DONE BY KINDNESS	161
THE NEW DEMOCRACY	162
NOTES OF THE MONTH	163
LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND	164
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	165, 166
FILM BOARD OF CANADA	167
STORY TELLING AMONG FILM WORKERS	168
SOVIET SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FILMS	169, 170
CORRESPONDENCE	171
FILMS AND PEOPLE (U.S.A.)	171

VOL 4 NO. 1

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## IT WON'T BE DONE BY KINDNESS

THE key weakness in most British and American propaganda is that we treat democracy as if it were some kind of an almshouse. There is an assumption that after the war we shall be due for a period of convalescence, with administrators adjusting pale pink cushions of new legislation around the sorer quarters of our battered national anatomy. This is to be the reward of victory.

The time has surely come to root out such vague distortions of the thing we are fighting for. The war is moving into its most and most difficult phase. Political problems are beginning to march step by step with military problems. Some people see suspicion growing between the Allied nations, others see the spectre of compromise with fascism becoming clearer and harder in outline. It is no time for sentimentality.

What is the reason for the comfortably impotent conception of democracy with which we are so often fobbed off? It has not happened by accident. Propaganda is seldom accidental. Surely we must face the fact that our picture of democracy is soft and insidious because it is a picture which is intended to deceive. It pretends to delineate a new way of life but in fact does nothing of the kind. It succeeds only in glossing over the deep divisions between social groups within the United Nations, groups which soon will be moving into the open, ready for a battle for which the war against the Axis is only a preliminary skirmish. So it is that *Mrs. Miniver*, *This Above All*, *The War Against Mrs. Hadley*, are manifestations of the spirit which can talk of democracy and treat with Darlan, which can render lip-service to Beveridge and seek feverishly for loopholes through which the financial prestidigitators can find a way out to safety. On the face of it, to suggest a relationship between these slim screen novelettes and the final convulsions of monopoly-capitalism may seem fantastic. Yet the relationship is real. Such films represent a picture of democracy intended to satisfy a public appetite for progress without raising the revolutionary manifestations of progress. Such films seek to persuade us that simply by beating the Axis we shall attain a comfortable, kindly world which will make no more demands upon us than can be satisfied by regular attendance at church, the occasional perusal of a book of patriotic quotations and a belief in Father Christmas. The appeal is away from reason towards tradition, blind faith and

mysticism, "Don't think any more," says the parson in *This Above All*, "Follow your faith, not your mind."

Now, as never before in the history of this war, we need to follow our minds. Now is the time really to begin fighting for the things for which we so glibly argue that the war is being fought; and that means that hand in hand with hard fighting must go hard thinking. Now is the time to remember the miseries, frustrations and inept leadership of the pre-war years (if our Government were honest in its protestations that it seeks a new order, it would be making films to remind us that the horrors of peace can equal and even exceed in their apparent hopelessness the horrors of war). Yet unless we act with courage and speed we shall find that the carrot of a world revolution which has been dangled in front of our noses during the critical military phase of the war will begin to recede into the distance.

The greatest task of film propagandists lies ahead of them and not behind. We must counter the picture of a soft, passive, non-purposive democracy with a picture of democracy as a militant and exacting way of life, a hard road of human progress and not a drawing-room for the airing of good intentions. Grierson has made a beginning in the two first releases in his *Front of Action* series. In *Inside Fighting China* we are told that the Chinese are not asking for "peace in their time but for an opportunity to share in the growth of their country". In *Inside Fighting Russia* we see that the U.S.S.R. is strong because it is possessed by the rational conviction that it can one day achieve Lenin's ideal of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need".

To the production of similarly inspiring films there is bound to be increasing opposition. Even such diffident British films of social struggle as the Films Division of M.O.I. has managed to produce will be increasingly obstructed. We shall be asked to float away from such vulgar brass tacks into the cloud-cuckoo-land of pious social aspiration.

A people is as healthy as the goal to which it is consciously moving. We must present a clear goal for the British people. That is our first duty as propagandists. Our second duty is to describe the path to that distant goal in hard realistic terms and to prevent the grim obstacles ahead from being obscured in a sentimental mist of good intentions.



# THE NEW DEMOCRACY

THE year 1943, whether or not it justifies the self-satisfied cries of some of our permanent optimists, is certainly going to be a year in which clashes of ideas and of policy among the Allies will become more intensified. As the prospect of final military victory becomes less and less remote, so the reactionaries will creep out of their hidey-holes or throw off their hastily-assumed masks. It is of urgent importance, therefore, to formulate propaganda policies without delay. This must be done not only by each of the United Nations separately, but also by the United Nations as a body. The events in North Africa alone have proved how necessary is the latter condition.

Never before has there been such an opportunity for the propagandist. The Axis has been and is being increasingly thrown on the defensive in the ideological as well as the military sense. Less is heard of the New Order. And many of Goebbels' more successful lies have now boomeranged back. This does not necessarily mean that German morale is weakening. But it does mean that the whole propaganda front is now ready for a frontal assault by the United Nations—an assault which will be impossible as long as divided counsels prevail. Yet although there may be signs of disagreement between one Government and another, it is unlikely that any disagreement will be found between the peoples they represent, who one and all look to the establishment of at the least a more equitable form of society as a result of the present conflict. Too few of the democratic leaders have so far had the courage, the imagination, and possibly even the goodwill to formulate this strong new movement of common people all over the world into a declared and vigorous policy.

## Voice from the U.S.

Highly significant therefore are the utterances of Henry Wallace, Vice-President of the United States. Often he seems like a voice crying in the wilderness. But what he says shows a breadth of vision which is most urgently needed today.

In an article printed by the *Evening Standard* on January 1st, 1943, Wallace challenged the Geopoliticians of the Axis with the vision of a new Heartland. Not Eastern Europe and Western Asia as a centre of world control, but a Heartland "extending from Buenos Aires at the south, on and up through the United States, Canada, Alaska, Siberia, Russia and Western Europe, and including China and India". This, says Wallace, is the heartland of a New Democracy, and he adds: "By the New Democracy I do not mean Anglo-American domination of the world."

This new conception of the Heartland would be an idle fancy (less easily realised than the Haushofer theory of Geopolitik which under Hitler came, in 1941, within measurable distance of success) were it not for the fact that the course of world events has brought it into being. It is not a visionary's dream; it is a thesis based on fact.

Month by month the development of air power illustrates the possibilities. To thousands of pilots the map of the world they live in centres round the North Pole. The Arctic air routes are likely to become a dominating factor in the future of world civilisation. You only have to get a map of suitable projection and see where the direct flying routes of the world now lie. It may not be going too far to say that in the present development of air power lies the key either to the destruction of modern civilisation or to its re-birth. It is at least one of the powerful tools with which the people can carry out their will; and there is little doubt that Wallace's Heartland, dominated by the air-power of the New Democracy, is a nearer picture of a warless world than the marble tombs at Geneva. It is significant

that Wallace examines and, by implication, rejects another aspect of Air Power—one which may be found cogently argued in Seversky's book on the subject in which he visualises world domination by an air force based in the Western Hemisphere and having a striking range of at least 6,000 miles. "In the Air Power world," says Wallace, "America is just as much the heartland of the world as is Eastern Europe." . . . But he adds "We in the United States, while having full respect for geography, can't help wondering if ideas and organisation do not play an even more important part in world destiny."

Wallace's thesis is something which the propagandists should use. It has that appeal of combined fact and imagination which was so clearly seen in the effect of the publication of the Beveridge Report on the people of Britain. It is something not merely said, but meant.

Until the propagandists of the United Nations, severally and in concert, can base their efforts on conceptions as wide and as compelling as these, the final outcome of World War II will remain basically suspect in the minds of the people. And until the Governments of the United Nations act on policies which express the people's determination, the propagandists will be hampered in their work. Every day it becomes clearer that the world of tomorrow is the war-weapon of today, and that, like other weapons, it must be tangible, and not a promissory note. We are more likely to suffer in the long run from lack of social constructiveness than from lack of dive-bombers. In other words, it is vital that the gigantic military onslaught which we are now about to launch on Italy, Germany and Japan shall be backed by a faith which is not blind nor passive, but far-seeing, active, and based on reason. Such a faith is, surely, the secret of Russia's military successes; the lack of it, surely, was the secret of Allied failures in 1940 and 1941.

The geopolitik of Mackinder and Haushofer was nothing until, as Wallace says, Hitler put flesh on its dry bones. Soon its bones will be dry again, for it has proved a false faith. Hitler clothed it with an outworn conception of the State as a mystical body to which the citizen must be subservient. The faith of the New Democracy conceives of the State as the collective and active organisation of the people. It is for that faith that the people are fighting, and it is that faith which the quislings and crypto-quislings of every country will destroy at any cost—even that of self-betrayal.

So there is, even in the present turmoil, when the motives of governments are becoming more and more schizophrenic, when increasing military efficiency and success are matched by increasingly suspicious and reactionary activities in the political field, much that the propagandists can do.

In all their work they can, and must, express an active faith. In each country the conception is of a community totally mobilised for a positive purpose. Problems are positive, not negative. Situations are facts to be dealt with, not mere opportunities for discussion.

## Object Lesson

To film makers, a Soviet film like *The New Teacher* is an obvious object lesson on these lines. Here is a picture which reveals the individual, with all his foibles and humanities, in relation to the community. It is a scenario based correctly on the assumption that the individual and the community go together.

Easy for the Russians to express this—they have built a state on this very conception. Not so easy for the British or the

(Continued on next page)

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### A Bit of Nonsense

WE ARE indebted to the New York correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* for the following account of a Hollywood wriggling display:—

Mr. Walter Wanger, president of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences, informed me to-day that it was an "outrageous libel" to suggest that the leaders of the American film industry were trying to prevent Noel Coward's film *In Which We Serve* being considered for the Academy's awards for 1942.

Earlier in the day officials of the United Artists Company, which is distributing the picture in the United States, asserted that an effort was being made to "freeze it out".

They explained that the lists were usually closed about January 15th, but this year the date was being changed to December 31st. Since the Coward picture would not open on the West Coast until after January 1st this would have the effect of putting it out of court.

(Continued from p. 162)

Americans, who still live under conditions where rugged individualism—be it one man or an imposing corporation enshrined in Victorian Gothic or neo-Georgian concrete—is still no more than slightly cracked in the foundations. True enough, but no excuse. From every side in wartime Britain come evidences of the wider conceptions, from the man who dies in the blitz for the honour of Paradise Street, E.C., to the hundred and one unspectacular evidences of community endeavour in village, city, field and factory, each one of which is, to a greater or lesser degree, a microcosm of the whole idea of an active community.

Today it is the task of the propagandist—and not least of the film propagandist—to gear his work to these very simple conceptions. It is not only a question of smashing the fist into the face of reaction or treachery to the people wherever it is found, but also of presenting every story in the active, positive sense of a community on the march.

It is too late merely to pose, say, the problem of bad factory conditions or Army pay as something to be beefed about first, and then discussed as a problem with various possible solutions. It is not so much the problem which must be posed: it is, rather, the sense of an active community organising itself to meet and solve any and every problem which impedes its progress. All this may, for the time being, be regarded only as an attitude, as a different approach. But that difference of approach is the fresh blood our propaganda needs.

So there are a few New Year resolutions which we must make, and which we must keep:—

1. To express in positive terms the activity of the community.
2. To express the will of the community in terms of a faith based on known facts as well as on a realisation of essential tendencies.
3. To seek out not merely the problems, but also the growing points of community activity which in any degree arise from them.
4. To present the International World in terms not of power politics but of the power of the people, whether we call it the New Democracy, New Heartland, or just the United Nations.
5. To fight all attempts to gloss over or explain away episodes or facts which are basically against the interests of the people's war.
6. To remember that our work deals with human beings, not blueprints; and that each human being must become a member of an active community, or perish.

Mr. Wanger said: "I would certainly like to see *In Which We Serve* among the pictures of the year considered by the Academy for awards. I saw it in New York and I think it is a great picture and one that is eligible for all the awards we have.

"But it is not our fault if it is not shown here in time to be included among the pictures of 1942.

"It is true that in the past we have sometimes included films shown as late as January 15th, but it is not true that the proposal to make December 31st the dead line was made with a view to excluding this particular picture. It has merely been decided that the end of the year is the most logical date on which to terminate the year."

"To this United Artists replied that they were not informed until Friday night that pictures not shown before December 31st would not be accepted . . . . ."

### Housing Problems

A STRIKING demonstration of the wide current interest in social questions is provided by the distribution figures of the British Commercial Gas Association film library. Like other non-theatrical libraries, the collection of Gas Industry films (which includes several documentaries on sociological subjects) has since the outbreak of war experienced an increased demand which now exceeds the available supply of copies. During this period the order of popularity of the films has changed and it is somewhat surprising to find that the film most sought after today is *Housing Problems*. This film record of slum life in the East End of London and about the steps which must be taken to deal with the social evil was made as long ago as 1935 in the first year of major Gas Industry production and has since been shown all over the world. The situation it deals with has now changed, but the fact that schools, colleges, civil defence, adult educational and Service groups are anxious to see a film of this description is heartening evidence of the widespread desire to ensure that the post-war world will not see a repetition of pre-war miseries.

### Eric Knight

THE LATE Eric Knight's many friends in the Documentary Movement will wish to join us in recording our sharp sense of the loss of a staunch ally and in expressing our deep sympathy to his widow. We quote from *The Times* obituary:

"Major Eric Knight was killed on January 15th, when a transport aeroplane in which he was travelling crashed off the coast of Dutch Guiana. Born in Yorkshire in 1897, Eric Knight spent most of his life in the United States. But until he wrote his best-selling work, *This Above All* (which was later made into a film), it was for books about Yorkshire that he was chiefly famous on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly *Song On Your Bugles* and *The Flying Yorkshireman*. Eric Knight served in the last war with the Canadian Army, and in the years that followed gained an unrivalled reputation in America as film critic on the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, for which he worked between 1925 and 1935. In this war he had for the nine months preceding his death been working in the Film Unit of the United States Army. His death has deprived both the United States and Britain of a tireless worker for good relations between the two countries. He wrote the booklet which is given to members of the American Forces who come to Britain, and when he was over in this country last year he wrote at the request of the Ministry of Information the story for a film stressing the need for the international planning of food resources. . . . ."

# LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

## A new growing point for Documentary

by E. S. Andrews, Producer for the  
National Film Unit of New Zealand

**S**URVEYING his countrymen from the dispassionate heights of a Carnegie grant, a New Zealander once said that we were a nation of inspired amateurs, that we were so universally capable of building fowl-houses and improvising machinery that we looked on experts with an unwise contempt. Rapid wartime expansion of industry has wiped out any trace of contempt for expert craftsmen, and at the same time has given play to the fresh mindedness and adaptability of the amateur. Witness the New Zealand National Film Unit.

The Government Tourist Department's film staff used to make the prettiest scenes imaginable. But war cut the overseas tourist trade to the bone, and the Government Film Studios staff was whittled down to an unarticulated skeleton. By August 1942, necessity, economy and some persistent argument had re-created the Studios into the likeness of the National Film Unit, set up specially to discover New Zealand to New Zealanders, and to inform them about their own war effort.

From national habit, administrative machinery was improvised. The Studios and remaining technical staff belonged to the Tourist Department, so new staff became a charge on that Department, which pays the bills in the first instance and attends to administrative details. Direction of effort must come from the Cabinet, so the Director of Publicity in the Prime Minister's Department is ultimately responsible for the general line of war publicity followed by the Unit. Creative initiative must come from within, so the Unit hatches its own plots with a minimum of outside direction.

### War Expenses

Since the cost, including new equipment, is booked out to Hitler and Tojo via the War Expenses account and the Tourist Department finds itself with a tidy asset in full running order; since the Prime Minister's Department gets the kind of output it needs from a thoroughly efficient outfit; and since the Unit staff have a measure of professional freedom unusual in a Government Department, the National Film Unit works in a pretty happy atmosphere.

We have a producer, a studio manager, a production supervisor, a chief cameraman, a soundman, two complete three-man units, of director, assistant and cameraman, and a small laboratory staff. We are also lucky enough to have on call a carpenter, a model maker and three artists, with a woodwork shop that in its time built the Government Court at the Centennial Exhibition. There is a "still" processing department which handles all the processing of official war photographs, and lends us a hand when needed. Two of us were journalists, one was a programme man from radio, one a clerk in the public service, one a commercial artist. There were, and still are, abysmal gaps in our equipment, some of which is first class, and some of

which we had to improvise. But we started out on the assumption that, knowing what we wanted to say, we could find a way to say it. We did find a way, though not without sweat and headaches.

### Transition Difficulties

The task the Government set was to produce a weekly four-minute potted newsreel, and a monthly one-reeler which would give room for more considered statement. We slapped right into the job when we were so rawly new that for weeks we would notice faces round the place that we didn't recognise. We did not fully understand, thank goodness, what a handicap it was to be without an optical printer, without a re-recording outfit, without even a moviola. We just literally cut our way through transition difficulties and last week put "60th Week" on our newsreel titles. The one-reelers now add up to eighteen.

For having done the job it set out to do, the National Film Unit is reasonably satisfied with its activities, and audiences like the films. But every time we look at a newly finished print we feel that the next one is going to have just that extra something. It usually has, though we never find ourselves satisfied.

We are compelled to be brief in the weeklies, and commonsense and settled policy have made us omit any direct appeals to audiences. Our job is to give information pithily and interestingly, in the belief that an ounce of information is worth a ton of disembodied exhortation. Wartime industrial changes have given us a limitless field of interest. Workshops and workmen all over the country have proved times out of number that the impossible could be done. Unusual patterns of industry have developed, notably the co-ordination of scattered metal, lathes and drills, in garages and blacksmiths' shops from top to bottom of the Islands, as feeders for a central depot assembling armoured fighting vehicles. Our country in fact, is the review editor's heaven, with a novelty of social or industrial importance in every street.

John Grierson said three years ago that nobody had ever seen the New Zealand's face on the screen. Now we have all had a good look at ourselves, and we like it well enough to have started a mounting flow of film to Britain, Australia, America and the Middle East. Not the least of the Unit's contributions to international goodwill is its frequent visual presentation of the fact that men and women in workshops, farms and offices look the same in New Zealand as they do in Great Britain, in Russia, in America, and in every other country that has put the face of its people on the screen. We have in some measure romanticised ourselves. This is a beautiful country and we have shown it so. To the New Zealander, the brush, the scrub, the lakes and mountains are the outward symbol of freedom. They are flavoured with holiday

memories, of warm summer days fishing, love-making and lazing, of doing what he damn well pleases in his Christmas leave. In Grierson's phrase we are polynesian romantics, and we like it so much that way that we would fight off the whole world to keep it.

That is why the National Film Unit has missed no opportunity of making the visual contrast between these and quieter times. The holiday resorts are training grounds for soldiers; there are munition factories where the snow melts the tussock; timber itself is a defence industry. All that, along with the men and women in uniform and in factory overalls and farming dungarees, is up there on the screen to see.

The National Film Unit did this simply, sometimes almost naively in the first twelve months while it was learning to be national, learning about film and learning to be a unit. Of necessity the films have had a parochial tinge. We had no library material from other parts of the world: our only overseas camera unit was fixed with the N.Z.E.F. in the Middle East; we had, above all, to convince local audiences that they and their affairs were fit subjects for filming. Now, with the self-conscious stages in ourselves and our audiences quickly receding, we aim to fit New Zealand into the pattern of World War II and the more hopeful pattern that will grow out of it.

### For Home Use

In the main, our product will continue to be for home consumption, but we are sending an increasing number of films to other Dominions and especially to Great Britain; partly as Empire stock-shot material and partly for use in complete form.

An important subsidiary to the production side is the embryo National Film Library, mainly 16 mm., which was set in motion in August this year. Housed in the Government Film Studios, operating as a free library, and co-ordinating the film activities of the Education Department and the Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner, the new organisation already has met with a demand which far exceeds supply. Ministry of Information films from Great Britain, a few from Canada, some from the Indian Film Unit, 16 mm. copies of local productions, and some educational films reserved for school use constitute most of the stock. We have discovered in the vaults a few New Zealand primitives, Grierson's *Drifters*, Flaherty's *Moana*, and a hotch-potch collection of last-war negative.

As this is written, the major problem is to find enough prints of anything to satisfy what appears to be a national craving for 16 mm. film, but as stocks creep up to full level, more consideration will be given to programme preparation and to instruction in the use of films for various purposes.

All told, we feel that after a slow but very early start, New Zealand has settled down to a thorough appreciation of the value of films to the community.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Lift Your Head, Comrade.** Director: Michael Hankinson. Producer: Basil Wright. Script: Arthur Koestler. Production: Spectator Short Films. M.O.I. 13 minutes.

**Subject:** German and Austrian anti-fascists who are now working in the Pioneer Corps.

**Treatment:** Koestler wrote it—therefore one takes it for granted that the subject is treated as a refugee would wish. Hankinson directed and he presumably saw to it that he got the people he wanted to play the British parts. Wright produced and he is no "Let's crack it out by the duce and the week boys" producer; neither is he noted for insensitivity. Why then does this film which could have moved audiences throughout the country which does indeed move them intensely in parts—look as though it were made by Fitzpatrick after a brief tour of Dachau?

The treatment of the subject is simple enough. We are taken to the Headquarters of a Pioneer Unit as the men are parading. A British sergeant-major starts to call the roll but is unable to pronounce the difficult names because they are foreign. He calls to an N.C.O. to come and read "This bloody list". (Bloody indeed it is, for it contains the names of many Germans and Austrians—men who have been through Dachau—men who have escaped from the terror of being a Jew or a Trade Unionist in a Fascist land, to come and fight for the cause of freedom.) This gets a quick laugh but it is a laugh with a sting in it because the sergeant-major is like all the old jokes you ever heard about nasty sergeant-majors.

Now the Major appears and takes up the story. No doubt the particular Major chosen is good to little children, fond of animals and altogether extremely kind, wise and progressive. Unfortunately the camera has come between us and this ideal personality and turned him into something very different. His behaviour is between that of a circus ring-master and the Victorian head of a reformatory. He takes us round the camp and introduces us to the work the men are doing and gets them to tell us something of their past history. Their stories, so tragically common to the past twelve years of Nazi history, still have the power of stirring one to primitive anger and hatred. And the fact that these men are still able to continue their long struggle renews one's faith in humanity. We see some of the work they do—building camps, constructing coastal defences and manning the guns while they make ready for the Artillery to take over. In a moving sequence we see reconstructed the great moment when these men, aliens in a strange land, were first given arms. As long as the film sticks to the men it is good propaganda, good movie making and full of that courage and inspiration without which the best propaganda is dead.

The men look after their side of the film so I think we must blame the choice of the British personnel for making nonsense of their message. Nobody, least of all the men themselves, would expect to be wrapped in cottonwool, but it can surely not have been necessary to produce caricatures of British soldiers as their officers. Fortunately they are unbelievable caricatures so we can assume that one of those special distorting lenses

was used; you know, the kind that can make a Nazi Youth parade look like a message of hope for the future, or a service in a bombed country church like a bad farce.

**Propaganda Value:** This is difficult to assess. On the whole it will probably be good. Some people will not notice the strange twist given by the handling of the officers and will only see a good and encouraging message for the future of world co-operation. Those who do notice it will probably be able to discount it. One good thing is that the film is bound to raise a lot of points which will be discussed, such as anti-Semitism, treatment of the enemy after the war and the shape of the peace to come. In all the thousands of feet of celluloid which are so happily forgotten as soon as one steps from the cinema into the black-out, this is one reel which will have made its mark and be remembered.

**Kid or Be Killed.** Realist Films. Producer: John Taylor. Direction: Len Lye. Camera: E. Jenkins. 2 reels.

**Subject:** Stalking a sniper.

**Treatment:** A party of British soldiers are laying mines in the open. Hidden in a tree some way away is a German sniper who is picking them off one by one. A sergeant sets out to find the sniper and kill him. The film is the story of his hunt, a hunt to the death, and it is without doubt one of the most exciting films ever made. In these two reels there is more suspense than we have seen on the screen for years. First sergeant hunts German, then the roles are reversed and German hunts sergeant, then hunter again becomes hunted. Across fields, by hedges and into a wood, every move made by either side becoming a matter of life or death for the audience. One wants to cheer when the German gives his first position away by a careless use of his field glasses and one's eyes, becoming the sergeant's eyes, ache from peering into the chequered shadows of the wood. When the German treads on a twig the resulting crack is as great a shock as though a bomb had fallen from an empty sky. There is no commentary, but the thoughts of both hunter and hunted are spoken, one by a Scots voice, the other in English with a German intonation, and this device adds enormously to the tension. Here warfare is reduced to a primitive, man to man, contest, in which the colour of a leaf, the sudden movement of a horse, the keenness of one's eyes or ears, may mean life or death. Your life or his.

The sergeant eventually kills the German and then, using the dead body as a grotesque decoy, picks off the members of a scouting party as they come up to investigate.

The film has the very magic of cinema in it, every legitimate device has been used with an integrity which is rare in film making. The film is for theatrical release in America, but unfortunately, only for non-theatrical circulation in this country. It is well worth your while to hunt it out—that is if you don't mind being shaken up, frightened and fascinated.

**Propaganda Value.** Excellent. One of the best shorts turned out by the Ministry of Information.

**Worker and War Front.** Number Three. M.O.I. Non-theatrical.

**Subject:** A fortnightly magazine of various items relating to the war effort.

**Treatment:** It is sometimes a little difficult to understand exactly what these magazines are getting at. They are not particularly entertaining nor are they very instructive. Neither are they particularly boring being mostly well shot and edited. They have rather the same effect as those routine items in the daily press which one usually only reads on a long train journey like "More Carrots Being Eaten", "Mother of Twelve Works Night Shift" or "Caraway Seed Collectors Go To It". In this issue we are told, among other things, that the dockers are doing a damn good job, that the railings are being taken down round the squares, but that unless we behave ourselves they will be put back after the war, and finally Ben Lyon, Bebe Daniels and Vic Oliver appear in a rather inept tail piece. It would possibly be a help if the commentary was dramatised to make up for the lack of news value. Or again it might be possible to find slightly more unusual subjects to film.

**Propaganda Value.** Difficult to assess but to see one of these films during a showing in a factory might quite easily prove all the above remarks to be entirely wrong.

**Tank Battle.** Production: Army Film Unit. Commentator: Raymond Glendinning. Running Time: 12 minutes. M.O.I. Home Theatrical.

**Subject:** This film is apparently designed to show what happens on the battlefield in a clash between two opposing tank forces.

**Treatment:** The film postulates a situation arising during manoeuvres. British defending forces become aware that a German Panzer force will attempt to break through their lines and capture a strategic point. We see councils of war take place on both sides and we see the Nazi force decide upon a particular stratagem whilst the British C.O. deploys his defending units to meet all likely contingencies. Out in the field we see the tanks lumbering about and then a surprise German move reported in the nick of time by a British reconnaissance party, with the result that the quick-witted Commander at headquarters correctly interprets the stratagem and proceeds to forestall it. He sends two converging columns of British tanks to intercept the Nazi force and defeat it.

It is conceivable that the tactics employed in these exercises are militarily sound, but the general effect remains dismally unconvincing. In some directions meticulous care has been taken to ensure accuracy but for the most part the troops behave as if it were a spare-time frolic. No attention is paid to the almost certain intervention of forces other than tank forces.

**Propaganda Value:** Very low. From the line of the film it is impossible to guess for what type of audience it was designed and one is left with the depressing conclusion that it was designed for no audience-type whatsoever.



New Documentary Films<sup>2</sup>(continued)

**B.B.C. Brains Trust.** Production: Strand Film Co. Producers: Donald Taylor and Howard Thomas. Camera: Jo Jago, Charles Marlborough, Hal Young, Moray Grant. Editor: Alan Osbiston. Subject: A film version of the broadcast feature. Treatment: With great commercial nous, Strand Films has set up four cameras in front of the Brains Trust table and persuaded Question-master McCullough, Joad, Huxley, Jenny Lee, Elliott and Campbell to go through their B.B.C. studio motions as un-self-consciously as if there were not a single prying eye to watch their frowning, pouting and malicious outbursts of glee. All these speakers are in characteristic form and the fact that they are somewhat more fluent than usual and that we have to suffer fewer stupidities than find their way over the air, probably is because advantage has been taken of the opportunity to edit the material. The answers are, however, spontaneous and unprepared and audiences will be fascinated by the whole lively business. There is no doubt that the Brains Trust is more entertaining if it is seen as well as heard—particularly when the visible reactions of members are as eloquent as in this first release. A critic in the Sunday Press has suggested that in this automatic objective reporting style we have the lowest form of film making. It appears that the writer would have preferred the director to interpret the answers with his camera and to have intervened with his own personal reactions to what is said. Surely most people will prefer to find no anonymous personality coming between them and the members of the Trust. Moreover, any film-maker with experience in handling this kind of shooting will understand that to get rid completely of all camera-consciousness, even in the case of such distinguished non-professionals as the members of the Brains Trust, is in itself a considerable feat of film-making.

**Propaganda Value:** This series obviously will provide an important forum for the discussion of topical problems. In the first release there is a tendency to pull punches and in a discussion about Left and Right in politics there is an attempt to preserve an artificial balance between the two sides. Unless this tendency is quickly scotched the value of the whole series will be seriously weakened. The discussions become meaningless unless every point of view can be put fearlessly without afterthoughts about its effect in interested quarters.

**Worker and Warfront, No. 4:** One reel. M.O.I. Subject: Magazine film for factories.

**Treatment:** This series has taken on a new lease of life. Where before it was ineffectual and irritating it is now lively and entertaining. This issue deals with building an aerodrome, making camouflage nets, testing recipes for the Food Facts advertisements, and the delights of an evening at the All-Services Clubs. The aerodrome sequence is very tough and exciting, the camouflage sequence, although more conventional, carries its weight, the Food Fact was interesting (even if the thing which they made and ate with such relish sounded pretty dreary) and the soldiers' night out was novel and gay. Colin Wills doesn't seem to be the ideal commentator, anybody from another country is almost bound to give the impression that he is visiting a well-run zoo, but he carries the thing along well enough.

**Propaganda value:** Good entertaining stuff with war interest value.



## FILMS OF GREAT BRITAIN LIMITED

FOR

## U. S. S. R.

"Milk and Science"



FOR

## CANADA

"Medical Aid for Britain"

FOR

## THE EAST

"Motive Power"

"Movement"

"Flight"

"Water Travel"



FOR

## BRITAIN

"Cereal Seed Disinfection"

"Welding Agricultural Machinery"

"Technical Education"

"Flight in the Future"

PARK STUDIO  
PUTNEY PARK LANE  
S.W.15. PUTNEY 6274.

Managing Director:  
ANDREW BUCHANAN

# FILM BOARD OF CANADA

## Programme of production and distribution rapidly expands

(from *Business Screen* Oct. 1942)

**I**N a war which is total or nothing the Canadian Government, through its National Film Board is producing documentary war films whose hard-hitting realism has broken with the accepted motion picture formula as completely as the Nazis broke with the Maginot mind.

Contrasted with the traditional caution of governmental enterprises, and their instinct for dealing gingerly with major issues, Government Film Commissioner John Grierson and Director Stuart Legg are turning out a brand of fighting front films which leave no doubt whatsoever that their objective is to jolt Canadian motion picture audiences next to the grim realities of war. In few other countries has any department of government permitted itself to view facts so realistically or to hammer them home so hard. That the method has succeeded is proved by the fact that the National Film Board pictures now enjoy international circulation and have been ranked among the best war-reporting jobs so far produced by any of the United Nations.

The war series, *Canada Carries On* and *The World in Action*, circulate theatrically on an ordinary commercial basis. Speaking of the *Canada Carries On* series before the National Board of Review in New York on November 13th, 1941, Grierson remarked, "We said from the first that we were not giving it away. We were selling it commercially because if it was good, it was good enough to sell commercially, and if it wasn't good enough to sell commercially, we weren't more interested in it than the industry. In other words we decided to put our work on a normal basis and use that as a yardstick of our success in public information."

In Canada the *Canada Carries On* series, made in co-operation with the Public Information Division of the Department of National War Services (now being replaced by the Wartime Information Board), plays 900 or ninety per cent of Canadian theatres, seventy of them French. Regular French versions are made of each monthly release.

John Grierson was convinced from the outbreak of war that the United Nations must tell their story with all the dynamics of public information geared to total war and that the process must be international or not at all.

How far this purpose has been achieved by the Canadian documentary film can be judged by the fact that the *World in Action* series is distributed throughout the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa and the Latin Americas, where sound tracks are translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Since April, 1940, the National Film Board has been producing one theatrical two-reel war film a month, and since April, 1942, it has produced two. Theatre releases also include weekly newsclips, novelty trailers on government campaigns and a French language news-reel entitled *Les Actualités Olympiques*.

Through long experience in the fields of education and propaganda, Grierson has never fallen into the error of underrating these weapons

in the hands of the enemy nor the consummate skill with which the Nazis have learned to use them. He has consistently held that the only defence lies in attack and that to achieve victory the United Nations must state their faith in stronger terms than the enemy. It is this actuality approach to film-making, coupled with a long-range view of the film as an instrument of public education, that has endowed Canadian documentaries with their tough core of realism, their blunt refusal to treat with any emotion less comforting than the truth.

In Canada, government film production and distribution is centralised under authority of the National Film Board which in turn looks after the film interests of all government departments. The Board includes two government ministers, three senior civil servants and three members of the public chosen for their interest in and knowledge of the films as an instrument of public policy.

Although less widely known than *Canada Carries On* and *The World in Action* war films, the National Film Board's 16 millimetre production plan has been expanding steadily over the past two years. In addition to films on school subjects and adult education this now includes wartime economics and special films made for key government departments such as Munitions and Supply, Wartime Prices and Trade Board, General Post Office, Labour, the Civilian Director of Recruiting, the Director General of Aircraft, the Army, Navy and R.C.A.F. and the Department of National Defence.

Non-theatrical distribution in Canada is carried out mainly through twenty regional libraries set up throughout the nine provinces. In the more thickly populated regions of Ontario and Quebec there are as many as four film libraries. Through these libraries both war and educational films are available on a loan or purchase basis. At the end of six months of theatre showing, films in the *Canada Carries On* series are reduced to 16 millimetre and become available for schools, camps, clubs, churches, or any other community organisation that wishes to put on a programme.

As a teaching medium the film in Canada is proving an instrument of flexibility and range. It can and does instruct the army in tactics and arms, demonstrates the use of preventive medicine, first aid and A.R.P., teaches the use of precision tools and is introducing new approaches to history, social studies and art. Planned for future production are films dealing with agriculture, housing, health, medicine, nutrition, social welfare and other branches of public service.

As interpreter of Canada to Canadians themselves the documentary film is showing how much in the past they have looked at, yet never truly seen. Northwest the colour camera has explored the rich Peace River district of British Columbia; in *Great Lakes* brought back a record of Canada's inland water-ways and the powerful flow of their lake-borne traffic. It has followed

the Indian trapper into the Northland and caught the *habitant* farmer of Quebec as, with horse and sleigh, he starts out through the woods to tap the sugar bush.

Settlement in Canada is widely scattered, with many communities living far outside theatre range. To include such isolated communities the National Film Board, in co-operation with the Director of Public Information and the Canadian Council for Education in Citizenship, established in January 1942 a project for thirty 16-millimetre travelling theatres. The object of these rural circuits was two-fold. First to bring people in remote settlements into visual contact with war and secondly to stimulate greater knowledge of and interest in current events among foreign language groups.

By June, 1942, the original thirty travelling theatres had increased to forty-seven with a monthly audience of more than 280,000, an audience scattered all the way from Vancouver Island, British Columbia, to the fishing villages of Nova Scotia.

Non-theatrical distribution of National Film Board pictures abroad is carried out by means of film libraries established in the offices of Canadian representatives. Considerable circulation of Canadian films is also secured through the British Ministry of Information's film library. In the United States, 16 millimetre distribution is handled in part through prints deposited with the Canadian Government Trade Commissioner in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, and by more than one hundred film libraries.

A number of films have been placed in the United States with libraries on an extended loan basis similar to that employed by the Office of War Information.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### WINTER ISSUE OUT

#### Some Contributors:

ELSPETH GRANT

FORSYTH HARDY

PATRICK MEREDITH

6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

# STORY TELLING AMONG FILM WORKERS

## An art that has become a tradition in the industry.

**T**he film business is a young and rowdy affair something like a newly discovered goldfield. There are still no brick or stone-built houses—there is no sanitation—the only bathroom is in the brothel—there are no schools, and vigilantes are still a necessity. Slowly though, this fifty year old Klondyke is maturing—making its own taboos and customs and traditions and among the more pleasant is a tradition of story telling. It is not a conscious art—a cameraman may have been away somewhere and when he gets back to his local pub or camera-room he tells of the things he has seen and heard. If the story goes down well he tells it again to other people and more or less unconsciously works it up, enlarges the best sections and gets the timing straight until it is tight and pat.

Cameramen for some reason are among the best story tellers; one thing common to quite a lot of them is the use of action to put a story over. At 7 o'clock in any pub close to a cameraman's headquarters, you are almost bound to see three or four men standing round while another ducks, pulls faces and waves his hands as he tells his story.

One of the best story tellers is Robert Flaherty. He needed quiet and a certain amount of drink and a few short stories to start him off, and drawing forward—he liked leaning on the table with both arms and his feet tucked back, toes pointing down, on either side of the chair—he would go off on a long detailed story of a man he met in an igloo on Cape Wolstenholme, or the Chinese cook or the Captain and four mounted policemen on a derelict schooner. One story he had in 1938 was of an Englishman named R. Q. Nelson, and it started early one morning on a tennis court in Hollywood. Ben Hecht, Charlie MacArthur and his wife Helen Hayes were down to have a game before going to the studios. Their fourth failed to turn up and after waiting around for a while they saw a young chap sitting on one of the benches. He was neatly dressed, but looked as if he had spent the night in the park, and at last they went up and asked him if he played tennis, and if he did, could he spare the time to have a game. He was a quiet young chap, English, his name was R. Q. Nelson, and he did play and he would be very pleased to make up a four if they had a spare racket. After the game, Nelson was invited back to breakfast and he told them his story. He was a clerk and had been working in an oil company office further down the coast until the Mexicans had taken over the oilfields or something like that and since then he had been unemployed. Hecht and MacArthur thought that it shouldn't be too difficult to get him a job at the studio. What did he think he could do? Nelson didn't think he could do anything very much connected with films. He hadn't even seen many. The one job he really knew was book-keeping. It was promptly decided that if he really didn't know anything about films at all and had seen very few, the best and only job for him was writing.

Later that morning Hecht passing a studio executive said: "Morning, Sol—d'you hear R. Q. Nelson's in town?" to which Sol, not being a full-blown executive by any means and only a fifth cousin of the boss, replied carefully:

"Oh, he, what's he going to do?"

"Nothing particular," said Hecht. "He's out to have a holiday and see some of his friends."

And careful Sol said: "One minute, Ben, it's slipped my memory for a moment, what does Nelson do?"

An J cunning, horrified Ben replied: "Do!" Do you mean to say you've forgotten his London productions?"

"Of course not. I remember now," Sol said. "I remember some of his stuff was on when I was over there last year, but I never got time to see them."

And as Hecht passed on he dropped the first seed. "You know a man like Nelson might come in very useful to the studio—a writer like him who's had nothing to do with films might get some fresh angles."

Later that day Hecht told the same story this time to a bigger shot than careful Sol, but with very much the same results except Hal's first reaction was:

"Who the hell is R. Q. Nelson?"

But on thinking he too remembered the well-known English writer. So the story went the rounds. Hecht and MacArthur gave it plenty of time and it finally ended at the producers' weekly conference. Sol had not been much in favour recently—at any other time he would not have bothered much, but the financial people had their representatives in the studio trying to cut down overheads and quite a few of his relatives had had to find other offices to sleep in and some of them, especially the ones who hadn't bothered to learn English, were finding it very difficult. Sol suggested that it might be a good idea if they could get R. Q. Nelson to co-operate on the next epic—that is if he could be persuaded, but to the usual question—"Who is?" came a chorus of the usual answer, and the big man side-stepping said:

"Of course. Yes, it's not a bad idea at all."

Next day Mr. Nelson was requested to lunch in the big man's private room. Hecht and MacArthur coached him that night. Their instructions were very simple,

"Just don't say anything but 'Yes' or 'No'."

Hecht took Nelson in to but "Yes" or "No". He was given an invitation too, and he was able to give a hand in any difficulties, but it was obvious that Mr. Nelson was an important person and studio writers were not admitted.

Well, everything went quite well. Nelson didn't say anything more than "Yes" or "No". The big man was delighted with him and even took him on a personally conducted tour of the studio and later suggested politely that "everyone would be extremely obliged if Mr. Nelson could take say six months off from his own extremely important work to give them his advice on a few stories". Then and then only did everything nearly break down. Nelson thought that the joke had gone far enough, but he couldn't just call it off and possibly get his new friends into a jam. When the big man ended up with—

"We could pay you a salary of say 450 dollars a week," Nelson really decided it was time he

was moving. Desperate he had a bright idea. "I'd like to very much, I've always wanted to work in films, but I have definite commitments and I must be back in London before the end of next month."

But the big man wasn't to be denied. The offer rose to 550 then 650 and then 750, and Nelson was so dazed that before he knew what had happened, he was out of the office and on the way home with Hecht, and the contract was following in the next day's post.

Briefed before starting work by his three friends, the advice was exactly the same as before—nothing but "Yes" or "No" or "Nice weather", and above all "Don't put anything down on paper."

During the next few months Hecht and MacArthur had another of their battles with the studio and finally ended up in New York and that was the last they heard of R. Q. Nelson for a long time. They had been extremely careful not to tell even their best friends the story and they themselves had more or less forgotten it when one day about two years later a friend named Peter Freuchen, an explorer and author, arrived. He was just back from a visit to Hudson's Bay for one of the major studios and it came out in the course of the evening that he had been sent up to help an Englishman named R. Q. Nelson.

So for two years Nelson had managed to keep quiet and every week 750 golden dollars had been placed respectfully on his desk. Far more amazing still was that when Freuchen had suggested flying from Hollywood to Hudson's Bay the studio had stopped it and said that they could not take the risk with a man like Mr. Nelson and he had solemnly gone by train. Hecht asked him how he had got on with Nelson, and Freuchen said he found him a pleasant enough young chap—rather quiet, but good enough company once they had got friendly.

Time passed again and just over a year later Freuchen arrived in New York again and during the talk he said he had just come through Hollywood, and among others he had seen Nelson, who seemed to be getting on all right, and had asked him to read quite a good story he had written—but Freuchen did not think it was the kind of story that would appeal to the studios and he had advised Nelson that the best place for it would be a good magazine.

Well time went on, another year and a half and Hecht and MacArthur had produced *Crime without Passion*, and were back again in Hollywood. Soon after they arrived they decided to look up their brain child, but when they rang the studios they were told that Mr. Nelson wasn't there any more. Looking through the telephone book they found him at a number well outside Hollywood and finally they all met and the end of the story was cleared. For four years Nelson had stayed at the studio and the only work he had done was the story that Freuchen had seen. He had kept it in his drawer until he could stand it no longer and had sent it in to the big man... there was no reply, but they had not renewed his option at the end of the year. But in a lot of ways he was glad. He had saved most of his 750 a week and with it had got his wife and children out from England and had bought a very nice ranch about 50 miles from Hollywood at which they would all always be welcome.

# SOVIET SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONAL FILMS

ONE important point in the background of Soviet Scientific and Technical films should be noted by the Western reader. There are of course no distribution difficulties. There is no question of making a film for a given audience, and then not getting access to it; if for the public, because no renter will handle it, or theatres won't show it; if for an educational purpose, because the lecture theatres or factories, etc., lack projection apparatus. The Soviet picture made would be part of a planned output and get its chance. No one would make films to teach, say, engineering, without an adequate screen network to reach engineers (or secondary school pupils, or whatever) being simultaneously planned. That is why the authors of the sketch printed here have treated the question as simply a production problem, a theme problem.

*The present is not an original article, nor an exact translation, but the digest of a chapter with the above title written by S. Beskov, I. Vasiliev and L. Ryabinin and included in "Twenty Years of Soviet Cinematography", published by the State Publishing House, U.S.S.R., 1940. Three notes have been added by Ivor Montagu.*

Very soon after the nationalisation of the film industry in 1920, Lenin urged that film propaganda should be used to help the organisation of production. On the instruction of Lenin, and under the supervision of an Engineer named Klasson, two films were made on the hydraulic method of obtaining peat—one portraying familiar methods of peat work and the other the use of a peat pump. These were the first technical-instructional films made in the Soviet Union.

By 1925 already a number of popular-scientific and technical-instructional films had been produced. A list of some titles will indicate the types of subjects.

**Medical-Biological:** *Fatigue and the Struggle Against It, The Problem of Nutrition, Abstinence, The Mechanism of the Brain, The Truth about Life, Tuberculosis, Labour and Health, Alcohol, First Aid in Accidents.*

**Other Spheres of Knowledge:** *Earth and Cloud, Sound, Chemical Weapons, In Europe, Pages from the History of "Pravda".*

At this time there was no very clear idea of the nature of the scientific film. Too often story elements would be introduced to hold the audience's attention, and the teaching content would be thrust into the background or the theme vulgarised. Only the externals of a given process would be shown. There was not profound enough depiction, in films of mechanisms, of the interdependence of their parts, the rationalisation of technical processes and production associated with them. The main weakness, however, was that they were not planned for a definite auditorium, there was no differentiation of groups of spectators. Films were not, for example, produced specially for

workers in a given speciality, or for secondary school pupils, or higher technical school or university students.

(NOTE 1.)

Three films from this period have been in England. *Neurasthenia*, a film of the type criticised above for being based on story elements, was brought over for a Medical Congress, but, owing to various difficulties, not exhibited. *Mechanism of the Brain*, directed by Pudovkin, a beautiful and lyrical introduction to the subject, designed for serious audiences of non-specialists, was shown at the Film Society; and *Struggle for Life*, a popular audience nature picture illustrative of its title, was generally exhibited.

With the opening of the first Stalin Five-Year Plan there was a great increase in the attention to such films. A special department for their production was set up in one of the feature film studios. But this was soon found insufficient. A special technical production base became essential.

In 1932-33 three Scientific and Technical Film Studios were started—in Moscow, Leningrad and Novosibirsk respectively—exclusively for the production of scientific and technical instructional films. This for the first time gave the possibility of adequately perfecting the complex and peculiar technique appropriate to such films, e.g. animation of diagrams, speeding-up and slowing-down movement micro- and macro-photography. It also enabled the working out of a methodology suited to filming in workshops, on rail transport, on collective farms, etc.

Following the historic decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on schools, dated 5th September, 1931, and 25th August, 1932, the way was cleared for the development of special films for teaching in schools. Both technical and teaching staffs engaged on production of such films were increased, with excellent results.

## 4,000 Cultural Films

Among a whole series of films produced especially for secondary schools during this time were: *Salt, Lightning, Rain, Treasures of the Forests, Irrigation*. In similar fashion many films were produced for raising the general level of labour skill, for attainment of a minimum technical knowledge in each field, for technical schools and for universities.

In all, during the period of production of scientific and technical and instructional films, over 4,000 items have been produced. These constitute of course a rich storehouse of Socialist culture.

A great drawback from which such films suffered, however, was the casual and insufficiently co-ordinated choice of themes. Government decrees dated 23rd March and 27th November, 1938, prescribing a basic reorganisation of scientific film production, initiated systematic selection of subjects. The balance

of the output of subjects was placed under the Film Affairs Committee—the Government organ charged with supervision of the whole Soviet cinema. More attention to the literary qualities of scenarios, improved conditions of work, new methods of rewarding work all these led to great improvements which have been very marked in the course of the last two years. It will be well here to list examples of the product resulting:

Prof. V. N. Lebedev and his group, who specialised in micro- and macro-photography, have made: *Bacteria, Green Algae, Pathogenic Protozoa, the Structure of Vegetable Cells, Mosses, Ferns, Infusoria, The Development of the Embryo*, and other subjects not only of teaching value but some constituting valuable research. They have made many others for the general public, the most popular of these being: *The Development of the Frog* (Dolin).

## Darwinism

A series deals with various mammals, birds, insects and other animals: *Amphibia, The Ant-Amazons, Spiders* (Vinnitsky); *Winged Visitors* (Zguride), *The Island of White Birds* (Svetozarov), *Instinctive Behaviour in Animals* (Pavlov). An underlying theme of the scripts in all these is illustration of the basic principles of Darwinism. Among the films of this class, the biological films, a high place must be given to: *In the Depths of the Sea* (Zguride, scientific supervision by Prof. Lebedev).

Anatomical-Physiological films constitute another series: *Organs of Vision* (Shubin), *Experiments on the Circulation of the Blood* (Karin); *Breathing, the Digestive Organs*, and a special series of film lectures on the *Nervous System* (Galkin) are all devoted to portrayal of the complex processes that take place in living organisms.

Especial mention should be made of: *The Physiology and Pathology of the Higher Nervous System* (Gall), which acquaints the spectator with the classic experiments of Pavlov; and also of: *Interruption of the Heart Rhythm* (Bazynkin), scientific supervision by Prof. Zelenin) which latter successfully employs combination of image and sound.

Surgical pictures occupy the leading place among medical-instructional films. We shall here mention only two: *The Principles of Simple Surgery* (Galkin, scientific supervision by Prof. Girkolau) and *Total Plastic Surgery of the Thorax*. A series of films on *Neuro-Surgery* has been produced under the scientific supervision of Academician Burdenko. Of films dealing with education in Hygiene more than 25 subjects have been produced.

Another series of films deals with technical processes, Stakhanovite methods of work, new scientific discoveries and inventions. There are some on *Black Metallurgy* (blast furnace methods, steel production, foundry methods); on *Coloured Metallurgy* (the obtaining of aluminium, copper, gold); on *Machine-building* (various types of lathes, the Fraser, turning,



## Soviet Films

(Continued)

drillings); on fuels (oil, coal, peat); on the production of Textiles, Food, Wood, Glass, on Woodworking, on Constructional and Instrumental work, on Electrotechnics.

Films have been made for instructional training on Rail and Water Transport. Special mention is deserved by a *Course on the Motor Tractor*, produced under the scientific supervision of Academician Y. A. Chudakov, a Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences. In 1939 was issued a film entitled *Multitape Work* (Antonov), designed to popularise the new methods of work of the Stakhanovites in Heavy Industry.

Among scientific teaching films, subjects dealing with socialised agriculture occupy an important place. Twenty-two films were made on material connected with the All-Russian Agricultural Exhibition. Some dealt with the discoveries of Academicians Lysenko, Tsitsin and other scientists; others with the Stakhanovite methods of Maria Demchenko, the beet grower, Yefremov, Pasha Angelina the tractor driver and other village Stakhanovites. A great popular success has been attained by *The Transformer of Nature* (Svetozarov), a film on the work of the famous plant-breeder Michurin.

Of Geographical films, both for school and wider audiences, should be noted pictures on the life and mode of living of the peoples of the North and those dwelling beside the Amur, the Yenisei, the Northern Dvina and the Volga. Special pictures have been devoted to the various constituent Union Republics, such as the Byelorussians, the Ukrainian, the Turkmenian, the Uzbek, the Kazakh.

Another special field is historical films, such as: *Relics of Borodino* (Dubinsky), *Lord Great Novgorod* (Rubinstein), etc. Under the supervision of Academician Grekov and Prof. Picheta, film reconstructions from the past of the Russian people have been made using paintings and historical relics.

*The Architecture of Leningrad*, *The Tretyakov Gallery* (Nikolai); *The Hermitage* (Presnyakov), *Pushkin's Handwriting* (Vladimirov) and many other subjects have been made to popularise cultural treasures or enlist interest in questions concerning them.

Big future tasks face the Scientific and Technical-instructional film in the Soviet Union—particularly, the raising of the technical quality of the pictures, improvement in the sound and more exact methods of shooting. But now, in 1940, we have a definite schedule of subjects worked out and an experienced skilled staff. We therefore hope to be able to fulfil the expectations entertained of us by the Party and the Government.

### (NOTE 2.)

Films that have arrived in England since June 22nd, 1941, show two developments since the above chapter was written. First, a number of films in the last category—popularising cultural treasures—seem to be included in a *Soviet Art* series, issued by the Central Newsreel Studio. This may represent an organisational branching-off. Second, four numbers have come to England of a film-magazine, entitled *Science and Technique*, prepared under the scientific supervision of

Prof. Chudakov, issued monthly. Each is one reel and contains three subjects, popularising for general instruction well known scientific facts (the relation between breathing and blood), industrial processes (metallisation, the making of artificial precious stones, the building of the Palace of Soviets) new inventions or discoveries (a water-screen to protect furnace-workers, melon-pumpkin grafts, the twin-boat sea glider, Academician Kapitza's miniature turbine for liquefying air, Academician Lena Stern's method of treatment of shock). One issue is specially designed for young children. The Kapitza and Stern items have been prepared in English under the title *Two Discoveries*, the remainder as *Glimpses of Soviet Science*—the latter is to be publicly distributed by the Anglo-American Film Corporation. A remarkable two-reel film entitled *Experiments in the Revival of Organisms*, illustrating the work of Prof. Bryukhenko on artificial circulations and made under his supervision, introduced in English by Professor J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S., is issued by the Soviet Film Agency. All three of these films are obtainable on substandard from the Society for Cultural Relations.)

In the Nov.-Dec. issue of D.N.L. appeared a review of *Spring in the Farm*, a film of the Greenpark Unit. The cameraman responsible was Erwin Hillier, not Charles Marlborough, as we stated in the review.

## New Documentary Films

(continued)

**Malta G.C. Production:** Army Film Unit. R.A.F. Film Unit and Crown Film Unit. **Commentator:** Lt. Lawrence Olivier, R.N.V.R. **Music:** Sir Arnold Bax, played by R.A.F. Orchestra. **Running Time:** 15 minutes. **M.O.I. Subject:** The story of Malta under fire.

**Method of Treatment:** This account is composed from official and newsreel material and deals with complete thoroughness—as far as visuals are concerned—with the price Malta has paid for remaining a firm bastion of our waning and waxing Mediterranean power. We see the convoys come in, the enemy planes swooping down, the bombs dropping and many scenes of damage, all too familiar in every theatre of war. The scenes in Malta differ from those in other countries only in the massive sun-drenched texture of the white stone debris.

There has clearly been little time or opportunity to make much of a job of the clearing up, and measures of relief have not been easy to extemporise. The extent of the damage is appalling and the fortitude of the inhabitants unquestionable. So much is well presented but scarcely new. The film in fact adds little to newsreel excitement already experienced other than a religious over-tone introduced no doubt with an eye to its effect in certain overseas countries. **Propaganda Value:** Malta obviously deserved a "we can take it" film if ever a place did. It is probably nobody's fault if this kind of tribute seems nowadays to be a bit dated.

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Cinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**KINEMATOGRAPH  
WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.  
NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR,  
Dear Sir,

I am not a documentary film maker or an editor of D.N.L. or even a Mass Observer, so perhaps I can support your attitude towards the National Savings films without being accused of spite, spleen and possible malice. Documentary has the important job of informing the public and of influencing their feelings about the war. The only justification of official films is that the audience leaves the cinema or the canteen with useful knowledge, or with an improved attitude towards the war. Personally I found the majority of Five Minute films were successful enough to be conversation-worthy afterwards. I had been impressed by the modern army building railways in Persia, or by an Indian factory, or by the drama of the great harvest. Most of these films stood thinking about afterwards, but I found the Savings films failed, the arguments put forward and the information given seemed trite, the message may have been good but the reasoning was not convincing. The blame, I imagine, lies deep, since most of the press appeals to save seem childish and unconvincing. It is hard to believe that every five thousand pounds invested in certificates means that one more fighter will be built that would not be built otherwise, or that the drive for savings is just a huge scramble among a lot of kids for good marks; while a large housewife labelled "Guerilla Fighter" makes me writhe with shame and take a sniff of fresh air. The films did not fail because of Merton Park Studios or Spectator Films, it was not because they were badly made; I can still remember vividly the chalked pavement and the tinkling barrel organ of "Down Our Street" and there were some undeniably lovely shots of aircraft flying in "Wings for Victory". But they did nothing to convince me of the importance or urgency of Savings Groups nor was the enthusiasm they aroused relevant. And if documentaries are produced at the expense of the nation and fail to do their job, however pleasantly they may pass the time, then surely it is the duty of D.N.L. to attack them. Otherwise the public and the ministries can use them to attack the Films Division and the documentary workers as a whole.

Yours faithfully,

K. H. B. MASON

11 Highfield Road,  
Edgbaston, Birmingham

## Documentary News Letter

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

Owned and published by

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W.1  
GERRARD 4253

## FILMS AND PEOPLE (U.S.A.)

(from Motion Picture Almanac)

DURING the past year, the outstanding documentary film of feature length appeared to be Robert Flaherty's *The Land*, produced for the Department of Agriculture.

*Our Russian Front*, a feature compilation of Russian newsreel and other clips, was an undertaking of editing and scoring in which Joris Ivens, Marcel Craven, Albert Napas, and Elliott Paul participated.

Victor Stollhoff's two-reel *Better Dresses—Fifth Floor* was acquired for Latin-American distribution by the Office of Inter-American Affairs, but not distributed.

Irving Jacoby finished the two-reel *High Over The Borders*, depicting the flight of birds across international boundaries in the Western Hemisphere, and hinting its symbolism for unity. This was prepared jointly for the inter-American department, the New York Zoological Society, and the National Film Board of Canada.

Documentary Film Productions completed *Here Is Tomorrow* for the Co-operative League of the U.S.A. in three reels. Principals in its manufacture were Willard Van Dyke and Herbert Kerkow, Roger Barlow and Irving Lerner.

In May, Frontier Films released its three-year-in-the-making feature, *Native Land*, on civil liberties and their absence, in this country. Paul Strand and Leo Hurwitz directed. National distribution was sought, after a New York premiere.

Robert Kissack, head of the Visual Education Department of the University of Minnesota, presented his feature-length documentary *Minnesota Document*.

Willard Van Dyke left New York for South America in late December, for a six-month tour sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association, the purpose of which was to gather material for a 30-minute film showing the economic basis for inter-continental trade.

Ben Kerner and Julian Roffman did a four-reel film *Around the World with Ocean Cargo*, for the Insurance Companies of North America.

William Wells Productions finished *Report to the People* for the National Association of Infantile Paralysis.

Julian Bryan continued his series of films, *Americans All*, for the Office of Inter-American Affairs.

Leo Seltzer and Elain Basil worked on *Public Health Service* for Eastman Kodak Company in April, 1942. Mr. Seltzer had completed films on war in the Atlantic, and on aviation maintenance—for the Canadian Film Board.

Irving Hartley, in April, 1942, was editing the feature made for Patino Mines in South America, into a two-reel subject for the Inter-American Office. He also was doing a film for the American Film Center, on housing management.

Bob Churchill's *Spare Time in the Army*, made for the U.S. Army Signal Corps, received a Broadway showing at the Criterion and distribution by Columbia.

Formed at the College of the City of New York during the winter of 1942-43 was the Institute of Film Techniques, with initial enrolment of 185. Among lecturers were Alice Keliher, Robert Flaherty, Stuart Legg, Joris Ivens, Irving Lerner, Richard Ford, Norbert Lusk, John Ferno, Hans Richter.

### No. 9

## THE MERCHANT AND HIS FRIEND



"A certain Merchant had once a great desire to make a long journey. Now in regard that he was not very wealthy, 'It is requisite,' said he to himself, 'that before my departure I should leave some part of my estate in the city, to the end that if I meet with ill luck in my travels, I may have wherewithal to keep me at my return.' To this purpose he delivered a great number of bars of iron, which were a principal part of his wealth, in trust to one of his friends, desiring him to keep them during his absence; and then, taking his leave, away he went. Some time after, having had but ill luck in his travels, he returned home; and the first thing he did was to go to his Friend, and demand his iron: but his Friend, who owed several sums of money, having sold the iron to pay his own debts, made him this answer: 'Truly, friend,' said he, 'I put your iron into a room that was close locked, imagining it would have been there as secure as my own gold; but an accident has happened which nobody could have suspected, for there was a rat in the room which ate it all up.'

"The Merchant, pretending ignorance, replied, 'It is a terrible misfortune to me indeed; but I know of old that rats love iron extremely; I have suffered by them many times before in the same manner, and therefore can the better bear my present affliction.' This answer extremely pleased the Friend, who was glad to hear the Merchant so well inclined to believe that a rat had eaten his iron; and to remove all suspicions, desired him to dine with him the next day. The Merchant promised he would, but in the meantime he met in the middle of the city one of his Friend's children; the child he carried home, and locked up in a room. The next day he went to his Friend, who seemed to be in great affliction, which he asked him the cause of, as if he had been perfectly ignorant of what had happened.

"O, my dear friend,' answered the other, 'I beg you to excuse me, if you do not see me so cheerful as otherwise I would be; I have lost one of my children: I have had him cried by sound of trumpet, but I know not what is become of him.'

"O' replied the Merchant, 'I am grieved to hear this; for yesterday in the evening, as I parted from hence, I saw an owl in the air with a child in his claws; but whether it were yours I cannot tell.'

"Why, you most foolish and absurd creature!' replied the Friend, 'are you not ashamed to tell such an egregious lie? An owl, that weighs at most not above two or three pounds, can he carry a boy that weighs above fifty?'

"Why,' replied the Merchant, 'do you make such a wonder at that? As if in a country where one rat can eat a hundred tons' weight of iron, it were such a wonder for an owl to carry a child that weighs not over fifty pounds in all! The Friend, upon this, found that the Merchant was no such fool as he took him to be, begged his pardon for the cheat which he designed to have put upon him, restored him the value of his iron, and so had his son again.'

### REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

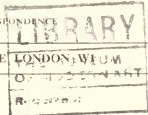
Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

FEB., 1943

## CONTENTS

BRITAIN'S FILM RÔLE IN AMERICA	173
THESE ARE THE MEN, BY DYLAN THOMAS	174
NOTES OF THE MONTH	175
THE FILM IN EDUCATION	176
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION	177, 178
FILM OF THE MONTH	179, 180
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	181, 182
THE WORKERS' FILM ASSOCIATION	183
CORRESPONDENCE	184



VOL 4 NO. 2

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE

LONDON: WIM

SIXPENCE

## Britain's Film Rôle in America

*Based on material supplied by several correspondents in the United States.*

**M**ost British visitors to the U.S.A. today find there a surprising enthusiasm for British films. This enthusiasm is in many ways misleading, and tends to obscure the real facts about the distribution and reception of British films in the U.S. during the past 3½ years.

True, the intelligent movie-goer raves over *Target for Tonight*; Hollywood technicians point to the influence of British documentaries on feature production; Washington executives praise British methods of giving information or raising morale by means of film.

But a colder appraisal, in terms of audience coverage, if not of audience reaction, would tell a different story. The distribution record is not so rosy. The American success of *Target for Tonight* and *49th Parallel* (known there as *The Invaders*) is now well known. The former still illustrates the daily news bulletins; the latter had in any case enough star names to sell it. Of shorts, *London Can Take It* made screen history—and illustrated real history. The film, including Quentin Reynolds, was easily understood by the New World citizenry.

Moderately successful were *Christmas Under Fire*, *Heart of Britain*, *Men of the Lightship*, *Squadron 992* and *Letter from Home*. Recently the Office of War Information has accepted *21 Miles* and *Night Shift* for re-editing and subsequent release to the 11,000 theatres which have agreed to run O.W.I. official shorts. And arrangements have been concluded with major distributors for the release of *Next of Kin*, *Coastal Command* (re-edited), *Merchant Seamen* (re-edited) and *We Sail at Midnight*. *Listen to Britain* has been refused by all theatrical distributors, but is to obtain 16 mm. distribution through O.W.I.

This theatrical distribution may seem somewhat meagre when it is considered that some 250 films have actually been made available and that from the propaganda point of view circulation in the theatres (however excellent the non-theatrical set-up may be) is of vital importance in the U.S.A.

There have been, and still are, a number of adverse factors which have to be faced in selling British official shorts for U.S. circulation. For instance, the shorts market is almost permanently at saturation point; it is exceedingly difficult to judge from time to time what is the most saleable length—one or two reels; there has been, and still is, sales resistance to British product based very often not on previous experience but on prejudice or on anti-British feeling.

With these and other factors to contend with, anyone trying to get a contract with a major U.S. distributor for British shorts needs to have on hand product which is not merely box-office *qua* subject matter but also meets American needs as regards treatment, accent and tempo.

The trouble at the British end is twofold. Firstly, there is the old lack of policy, or guidance on policy, which has made so much of the M.O.I.'s work ineffective. Secondly, there are the faults of the Films Division itself. From the point of view of U.S. distribution, the Films Division tends to send out films which have not been made with a real understanding of what is wanted by the U.S. market. Policy, if any, tries to suit current events and occasions. The time-lag of production, accentuated as it always is by delays (many of them avoidable), tends to make the finished film out of date.

In addition to this, our method of presentation is usually wrong. Much of our vernacular is unintelligible to U.S. audiences; some of our accents sound sissy and irritating to them. Our tempo is too slow for what they believe to be their hustling way of life. As a result our films lack speed, punch, attack and news value—all of which are marketable commodities in the U.S.A.

It has been said—by persons who should know better—that the Americans must learn to like our stuff, that we must stick to our own style, because it is so especially British. The answer is that in the stress of war we cannot, like the solitary donkey, let our message soak slowly through the sales resistance it undoubtedly meets. We must be British all right, but in terms immediately acceptable to the market.

One sometimes wonders whether the members of the Films Division ever take any notice of, or even read, the reports on the American problem which they must receive regularly, not merely from their U.S. representatives but also from others in a position to know. The *laissez faire*, negative, nineteen-twentyish, and almost feminine mystique of the Division suggests that they do not.

It would appear that there are certain policy lines which would help to solve our film propaganda problems in the U.S. We should, for instance, realise much more vividly the usefulness of immediate front-line news. The M.O.I. might well try for a much closer collaboration with Service and Newsreel units, in order to get a constant flow of spot news material across to the U.S. in the minimum time.

*(continued on page 184)*



# THESE ARE THE MEN *by Dylan Thomas*

It is the commentary of "These Are The Men", a Strand film, largely compiled from the German "Triumph Des Willens"—a record of the 1934 Reich Party Congress (at Nuremberg) produced by order of the Führer, created by Leni Riefenstahl. "These Are The Men" has been produced for the M.O.I. for theatrical distribution and the commentary, reprinted here with official permission, is Crown Copyright.

**T**he mood of the opening sequence of the film is quiet and slow. From a height we look down on to men baking bread, men going about their work quietly and efficiently, men of no particular nationality, just working men. We see them in the bakery, in the fields at harvest time, on the dock side, on a trawler, in an iron foundry.)

"Who are we? We are the makers the workers the bakers  
Making and baking bread all over the earth in every town and village,

In country quiet, in the ruins and the wounds of a bombed street  
With the wounded crying outside for the mercy of death in the city.  
Through war and pestilence and earthquake  
Baking the bread to feed the hunger of history.

"We are the makers, the workers, the farmers, the sailors,  
The tailors, the carpenters, the colliers, the fishermen,  
We dig the soil and the rock, we plough the land and the sea.  
So that all men may eat and be warm under the common sun."

(Now we see behind the workers, behind the work they are doing, the shadow of war. The men are still doing their jobs, jobs that are done all over the world, pottery, carpentry, sleeper-laying, steel-making. This is their peace-time work, but we see too what they or their brothers all over the world are doing now—fighting on every front.)

"We are the makers, the workers, the wounded, the dying, the dead,  
The blind, the frostbitten, the burned, the legless, the mad  
Sons of the earth who are fighting and hating and killing now  
In snow and sand and heat and mud;  
In the streets of never-lost Stalingrad,  
In the spine-freezing cold of the Caucasus,  
In the jungles of Papua,  
In the tank-churned black slime of Tunisia.

"We are the makers, the workers, the starving, the slaves  
In Greece and China and Poland, digging our own graves.

"Who sent us to kill, to be killed, to lose what we love?  
Widowed our women, unfathered our sons, broke the hearts of our homes?  
Who dragged us out, out of our beds and houses and workshops  
Into a battle-yard of split blood and split bones?"

(We are back in the bakery again—the camera tracks forward as one of the bakers opens the fire door—the camera still moves forward until the flames of the fire fill the screen.)

"Who set us at the throats of our comrades?  
Who is to blame?  
What men set man against man?  
*Shout, shout, shout out their name!"*

(The flames dissolve into hands raised in the Nazi salute—the sound dissolves into the frenzied "siege hail" of masses of men and women who crane their necks and push their fellows.

From a great height we look down on to the mighty crowd in the Nuremberg Festival. The people stand motionless now, in two vast phalanxes, their hands raised in the Nazi salute. Between the massed robot crowds, four tiny figures walk towards the rostrum at the end of the stadium. They are Hitler, Hess, Göring, Goebbels.)

The voice says, "These are the men—these are to blame."

Hitler begins to speak, to shout in German. Over the German an English voice, a would-be translator, says:

"I was born of poor parents.  
I grew into a discontented and neurotic child.  
My lungs were bad, my mother spoilt me and secured my exemption from military service. Consider my triumphant path to power:  
(*The crowd roars.*)

I took up art.  
I gave up art because I was incompetent.  
I became a bricklayer's labourer,  
A housepainter,  
A paperhanger,  
A peddler of pictures,  
A lance-corporal,  
A spy on socialists and communists,  
A hater of Jews and Trade Unions,  
A political prisoner.  
But my worth was known.  
Patriotic industrial magnates financed me.  
Röhm and others supported me.  
Later I betrayed and murdered Röhm and the others.  
They had fulfilled their purpose. (*The crowd roars.*)  
I am a normal man.  
I do not like meat, drink, or women.  
Heil,  
Heil,  
Neurosis, charlatanism, bombast, anti-socialism,  
Hate of the Jews, treachery, murder, race-insanity.  
I am the Leader of the German People."  
(*The crowd stamp and cheer with joy.*)

Goebbels speaks:

"My father was the son of a peasant, my mother a blacksmith's daughter.

But I was cleverer.  
After Heidelberg University, I became a writer of plays, a poet, a journalist. None of my work was accepted. And this was because the editors and publishers were Jews.  
Unemployed, Jew-hating, crippled, frustrated and bitter, I joined the Nazi Party.

Streicher and I founded a newspaper to propagate obscene lies against Jews and Socialists, and said that the Liberty of the Press was one of the greatest abuses of Democracy.  
Consequently I was appointed Propaganda leader to the whole of Germany.  
(*The Crowd cheers.*)

Göring speaks:

"I began well.  
I was the son of a Colonial Governor.  
I was rich.  
I became an officer and the air-ace of Germany.  
After the war I took to drugs  
And twice was confined in a lunatic asylum as a drug-addict.  
Then I joined the Nazi movement,  
Helped to organise the Storm-troops, the Gestapo, and the Secret Police.  
And established contact between  
The Nazi Party and Mussolini's Fascists.

I am a normal man:  
Twice married, twice mad.  
Gangsterism, brute force, wealth for the few, cocaine and murder."  
(The crowd roars.)

**Streicher speaks:**

"I am Streicher, a lover of birds and animals, a torturer and murderer of Jews."  
(They cheer.)

**Hess speaks:**

"I was one of the first members of the Nazi Party: a reactionary, anti-Jewish, ex-officer, restless, discontented, a believer in Blood and Iron. As early as 1920 I knew that Hitler was the Saviour. Heil Hitler! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!  
I became the Deputy Führer of Germany.  
In 1941 I flew to England, hoping to arrange a dishonourable peace between Germany and the pro-German elements I imagined I would find in England.  
Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!  
I was wrong. I am a prisoner.

(We then see the massed Gestapo marching, led by Himmler, and the crowd of youths who watch the ghastly parade.) The voice says:

"And these are the men, the young men, the callow boys  
Who have been taught the knuckle-duster and the rubber hose.  
You are young only once; you could have learned to love:  
You have learned to maim the weak and to spit on the Jews.

You have been taught to betray your country and your people.  
Your own flesh and blood, your comrades all over the earth;  
Young men like you have hacked and blasted  
The land and the homes of strangers who did you no harm.  
Burned men and women alive  
And left a slug-trail behind you of terror and death.

You obeyed your leader's word.  
You must suffer his reward."

(From the marching Gestapo we go to German prisoners being marched in Africa and Russia.)

"And the betrayers are betrayed, and the promises of victory  
Turn stale and sour under African sun and Russian snow."

(Dead Germans—Frozen corpses in the snow.)

"Where is your triumph now in the purgatories of Stalingrad?  
How many of you will never return to the towns and villages you know?"

(We fade out on masses of crosses over the graves of German soldiers. Back in Germany—close shots of youths and young boys.)

"Some of the young men, not utterly scarred and poisoned,  
Who have grown into manhood out of a school of horror,  
May yet be our comrades and brothers, workers and makers,  
After the agony of the world at war is over."

(The leaders who have betrayed them, who have poisoned their minds, and who want to spread their filthy doctrine all over the world, stand together on a raised platform.)

"But for those who taught them the business of death,  
Who crippled their hearts with cruelty, never, never, never  
Shall there be pardon or pity: no hope of a new birth.  
They shall be put down: Forever."

**HITLER screams:** "We are the men—Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!"

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The Films Division

THERE ARE some indications that higher quarters have begun to realise that all is not well in the Films Division of the M.O.I. The Division has so far enjoyed a good reputation, chiefly because it has publicised the Ministry and has been able to show concrete results denied to other Divisions. The trouble with the Division is not in its individual personnel but in their relation to the whole. The individual, however effective in himself, becomes quickly vitiated by the careless, *laissez-faire* atmosphere of the Division.

However efficient the machinery may be, the quality of the product leaves much to be desired. It is for M.O.I. officials, as well as film makers, to remember that the machine will only turn out a good product if good raw materials are supplied in the first place.

### A.C.T.

ONE WELCOME result of the war-time rationalisation of film production is the increasing power and influence of the Association of Cine-Technicians. The Association has recently concluded with the Association of Short Film producers, representing the employers, an agreement which regularises wages and working conditions. In some units, employees are meeting regularly to consider production problems and to advise the management. All this is good, and neither employer nor employee must be impatient if such developing relationships result in occasional growing pains. In those Short Film companies which specialise in documentary production these recent events do not represent a great change from the old methods of working. In most of the Documentary Units the distinction between employer and employee has always been vague. The principle has been that the demands of the job itself—the purpose and quality of the product—must take precedence over the personal interests of the film-maker, be he managing director or office-boy, and that what goes on the screen is more important than the luxuriousness or otherwise of the conditions under which it is made. Since A.C.T. believes that the production of propaganda and instructional films as a part of the war effort is a vital job to be done in defence of democracy, we have no doubt that the Association will continue to put the job first. The newly-won powers of A.C.T. can become a factor of great importance in stimulating a spirit of enthusiasm and in discouraging self-seeking amongst film-makers.

### William Hunter

WE REPORT with regret the sudden death, after an operation, of William Hunter, director of the Dartington Hall Film Unit, while serving in the photographic section of the R.A.F. Hunter had instituted a number of experiments in educational films, of which the most noteworthy was one on the Galapagos islands. His place at Dartington will be hard to fill.

### Canadian Good Sense

THE appointment of John Grierson as general manager of all Canadian propaganda services is a logical as well as a sensible step. Grierson's able and imaginative energies have long ranged outside the parochial confines of the film world—in which his sense of propaganda only served to emphasise the need for him sooner or later to enter wider fields. His new post is the Canadian equivalent of Director General of the M.O.I., and he is answerable only to his Minister. Many people here will envy the propagandists of Canada their new boss, and will, somewhat ruefully, attempt to calculate the magnitude of the loss which our own propaganda services may be found to have suffered through lack of a leader with a similar creative imagination and will to action. As it is, the vast mausoleum in Malet Street remains a monument to the continued neglect by the Government of the powerful weapon of propaganda.

# THE FILM IN EDUCATION

*This discussion of post-war needs in Education by R. S. Miles does not represent the views of D.N.L. However, as we are deeply interested in this important subject, we should be glad to invite correspondence from readers. Ed.*

IN the hopeful schemes for the post-war structure of education it has been gratifying to note that the authorities are prepared to grant some measure of recognition to the film not only as an aid to teaching but also as an art. The British Film Institute has seized upon this attitude of mind and has, by its recently concluded campaign done a vast amount of preliminary propaganda among L.E.A.'s and teachers. For the time when conditions permit, the Institute has already prepared a scheme for the establishment of regional film libraries which should put films within the reach of all schools suitably equipped. Many schools should be quickly provided with projectors after the war, if the fact is recognised early enough that there are large numbers of projectors now in use with the forces which will become redundant in the peace. Schools should have the first chance of securing them. The primary need of the school cinema is obviously a sufficient number of projectors, and if steps are taken now to earmark those in use by the Services one very big problem will have been solved.

The complementary need is for a plentiful supply of adequate films—adequate in the sense of being suitable for as many schools as possible. Urban, rural, junior, and senior schools must be considered, as must secondary, technical and similar schools along with Adult Education classes. This is a tall order, but one which needs a root and branch consideration now. Personally I am convinced that the greatest handicap to the use of films in schools is not the scarcity or cost of projectors but the lack of suitable films to justify the expenditure upon film apparatus. This problem has been ventilated many times in your columns and my object in re-opening it is to urge the need for the immediate establishment of committees to review the whole business of films in education and to plan educational film production.

## Reports on Films

In the first instance these will consist of practical teachers who will say what films they want, what points they would like emphasised and what merely sketched in. The reports emanating from this primary working committee would be collated by a Central Committee of which the British Film Institute should be the core.

This Central Committee would comprise representatives of film users (teachers), film makers (directors, etc.) and the British Film Institute. The necessity for such co-operation is emphasised every month by the Film Institute's Viewing Panels' reports on the "educational" films. A more damning denunciation of the quality of so-called educational films could not be imagined than many of the reports printed in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*. There is hardly one to reach the standard set by the various viewing panels. This then would seem to prove the assertion that the supply of films is the root of the whole question. Let this demand be met and the use of the whole film medium as an aid to educa-

tion will come into its own without much further ado.

The problems facing a Committee planning the supply of school films would include these: (1) to decide what subjects in the curriculum could be most usefully illustrated by means of films; (2) a "priority" list compiled from them for those subjects whose demands are most urgent or extensive; (3) a "titles" list in each subject, covering the aspects of that subject best lending themselves to filmic presentation; (4) the contents of each of these films and as a subsidiary question whether they are to be as sound and/or silent films; (5) the costs of each film, its length, the number of copies of each film to be printed; (6) the possibilities of making "master" films to act as a reservoir from which other ones could be made for varying ages and intelligences; (7) the producers of the various films; (8) the question of granting "suitability certificates" by the Committees after films have been seen by them; (9) the supply of films for teaching film appreciation; (10) the extent of the co-operation between buyers, i.e. teachers and L.E.A.'s and makers; the whole lot leading to the last one, the question of organised distribution through local film libraries.

This list of duties is a heavy one and perhaps not comprehensive, but it is sufficient to point the argument for the necessity of planning production.

It is obvious that every school subject has some possibilities for illustration by films. Even Mathematics, as Messrs. Duncanson and Kauffman have shown, can in part be so illustrated. Languages too can find films to be of great help but the value here is confined to modern languages where pictures of foreign life can be made more alive by the spoken language of that country. Apart perhaps from Roman and Greek History it would be difficult to envisage the film as an aid to the teaching of the classics. Most school subjects can, however, undoubtedly use films to their great value. Geography obviously, History also, "Science" in many of its branches. Mary Field has explored the field of biology. Petroleum Films Bureau have shown the way for films of chemistry, physics, and mechanics. The film has an excellent opportunity here to show the commercial application of laboratory experiments and formulae. Physical training, as has been done by a physical training instructor in Birmingham; nature study—some art perhaps, and more of the crafts are all further subjects in which the cinema can be used. For my own part I can see little if any use for the film in English teaching where so much depends upon individual inspiration and imagination.

Abstracted from this list of subjects would be a further one showing the precise possibilities that each had for films, indicated by those aspects of each subject the teaching of which would be definitely improved with the aid of films. Following from all this would be the important part of the whole scheme—a statement of titles of the films to serve this purpose. Great care would be needed here to prevent overlapping,

and the aspects listed under numbers (4) and (6) above would need to be incorporated in this consideration. It would perhaps be more economical and useful to make what I call "master" films covering as wide a sweep of the subject as possible and from these library films to construct others with specific age or intelligence groups in view. It seems as obvious and necessary as the different treatment required, for instance, in teaching juniors and University students about Alfred the Great. In the former case stress would be laid upon Alfred as a cook and a harpist. In the latter the significance of Alfred's statesmanship would form the theme for study. It is necessary and should be possible to treat subjects in a similar way filmically. Some ages are better taught by means of silent films and a teacher's own commentary. Some subjects may be better taught to all ages but in many cases sound is not only desirable but an advantage. It is for the Committee to decide what versions shall be made.

## Production Planning

When the subjects and contents of the films to be made have been decided, priorities for production must be assigned, annual production planned, the number of copies of each film decided and the firms to whom the making must be entrusted. This is very important because some firms have specialised in special types of films and consequently have accumulated special apparatus and experience with a staff who have gained specialist knowledge of their individual jobs. The production of diagrammatic films and biological films has been the speciality of G.B. Instructional under the genius of Mary Field, companies working for the British Commercial Gas Association have distinguished themselves by brilliant sociological and documentary films while the Shell Film Unit has made a name for the clear exposition of applied science. There are others but these will suffice to illustrate my point. To ask such firms to undertake mixed work would be both inefficient and uneconomic.

When the films have been made there should be a viewing panel of teachers to give the films the educational counterparts of "U" and "A" certificates, to criticise if necessary, and to prepare synopses and notes for potential users. For the better working of film production it would be advisable to have a standing committee of representatives of teachers, L.E.A.'s, the B.F.I. and film makers to deal with current matters of production and to act as a liaison branch between planning and production.

Finally the marketing of the finished product. Here again all interests must be represented and a vast amount must be devolved upon local committees, e.g. Teachers Associations. In this as in every one of these branches of the work the Film Institute has a paramount part to play. It should be the nerve centre of the whole system, and I would suggest that it is necessary immediately to set to work to plan film production after the war. The foregoing is an effort to indicate some of the problems to be solved and out of these I have omitted to say the supply and types of films required for the teaching of film appreciation. It is an urgent question of wide dimensions demanding an article to itself.

# MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

## United Kingdom Non-Theatrical Distribution 1941-1942

### Report on Second Year's Work

THE TOTAL audience for the Ministry's Non-Theatrical film shows in the United Kingdom during the second year of working (September 1941 to August 1942) was 12 million. The weekly audience at the beginning of the third year of working is now 350,000. This audience is reached in the following three ways:—

(1) *Mobile Film Units*.—During the year 1941-42 the mobile film units gave 38,000 shows to an audience of six and three-quarter millions. There are now 130 units on the road, and they are giving 1,200 film shows a week. One hundred and twenty-four of the units are 16 mm. and thirty-seven of these are equipped with petrol generators to provide electricity where there is no mains supply. Six of them are 35 mm. units.

(2) *Shows in Public Cinemas*.—In the year 1941-42, 1,300 shows were given in cinemas out of ordinary cinema hours to a total audience of 900,000. Now fifty a week are being given, including a large number of training shows for Civil Defence and National Fire Service personnel.

(3) *Central Film Library, loan to borrowers*.—The Central Film Library with its sub-libraries in Scotland and the South West Civil Defence Region in 1941-42 made 48,000 bookings of Ministry of Information films to 3,500 separate organisations with their own projectors. The audience reached by the loan of films was four and a half million. The library is now booking 1,500 Ministry of Information films a week to these borrowers.

The Central Film Library, London, also incorporates the pre-war Libraries of films about the Overseas Empire and the United Kingdom, including the G.P.O. films. A further 40,000 bookings of these films were made in 1941-42, and 1,000 a week are now being made.

The Film Officers at the Ministry's Regional Offices are responsible for the shows given on the mobile units and in cinemas out of ordinary cinema hours. The facts and figures given in this report are a record of their work. They were set the target of ten shows a week on each unit in operation. 38,000 shows were given, which represents 92 per cent achievement of a possible maximum of 42,000 shows.

The number of mobile unit shows cancelled during the year 1941-42 because of break-downs in equipment or the vans, was less than half per cent of the shows given. It is the responsibility of the projectionists, in the first instance, to keep their projectors and vans in efficient condition. In each Region there is also an engineer who keeps all equipment under constant supervision, and arranges for repairs that can be carried out without an elaborate workshop. In London the Ministry has expanded its maintenance department to carry out major repairs for all the Regions, and to arrange for stocking and despatching spare parts and reserve equipment. The maintenance department also trains new driver-projectorists. Women projectionists are now being trained, and several are already in charge of mobile units. This maintenance department also looks after all cars and equipment used by the Ministry for public address purposes.

#### Audiences and Programmes

During the week ending November 7th, 1942, 1,224 shows were given to audiences as follows:

Factories and construction sites	408
General shows	230
Civil Defence, National Fire Service and Home Guards	226
For other Government Depts. (Agriculture, Food, Health, Labour, Fuel)	78
Women's organisations	114
Schools	84
Youth organisations	46
Services and U.S. Army	22
Miscellaneous	16
	1,224

(The Ministry does not, except in special circumstances, give film shows to Service Units, as all the Services have their own organisations and equipment for showing films. Shows are only given to Senior schools by special request.)

About one third of the shows given each week are in factories, the majority of which have a show once a month. Another third are shows to village audiences, women's organisations and groups in small country towns. The aim is to give village shows regularly every two months. Shows for other Government departments of a more specialised kind, including training film shows to Civil Defence and National Fire Service personnel represent roughly another third. A large number of these shows are given in cities and urban districts. They are not organised on the same regular monthly and two-monthly circuits as factory and village shows.

Shows in factories are usually given during the midday and midnight breaks, and cannot therefore contain more than two or three films, lasting in all about 25 minutes. For factory shows films are specially produced, and aim at relating the work done in factories to the achievements and problems of the fighting fronts. 35 mm. mobile units are now in use for the large factories so that as many as 3,000 workers can see the show at one time.

General shows in villages usually consist of five or six films, lasting in all about 80 minutes. The series of programmes are devised to give varied and coherent pictures of the war, both at home and on the fighting fronts and in terms of this country, the Overseas Empire and the United Nations. Specialised films made for other Government departments are also included in these general programmes where they are needed to direct attention to special local problems.

Instructional films for special audiences are made and distributed by the Ministry on behalf of other Government departments. During 1941-42 these films have included films for farmers on silage, ploughing, hedging, ditching, etc.; films for allotment holders and films about food; films on blood transfusion, diphtheria immunisation and accident prevention; training films for Civil Defence personnel, both part

time and full time. Specialised films of this kind are usually shown together with other more general Ministry of Information films to make up a programme of about 80 minutes in length. Some of the films made on behalf of other Government departments are of such wide application that they are included in every possible programme. In this way, for example, the film *Fire Guard* was shown to more than two million people in six months.

In 1941-42, 49 films were produced and issued by the Ministry for non-theatrical showing only. A further 81 films were also used, some widely and some on occasions only; of these, 34 were films produced by the Ministry for cinema and overseas distribution; 16 were produced by Dominions Governments and the Government of India; 15 were produced by the American, Soviet and Polish Governments; and 16 films were acquired from commercial film companies and industrial concerns.

There are 332 films listed in the Ministry of Information catalogue issued by the Central Film Library. This represents all the films produced since September 1940, which are now available. They are classified under the following heads:—

Agriculture; Air Forces; Aircraft Recognition; Armies; Civil Defence, Education and Youth; Food, Diet and Cooking; Gardening; Government and Citizenship; Health, Hygiene and Medicine; Labour, Industry and Munitions; Navies; Salvage; Strategy, Campaign and Tactics; Women in the Services; Women in Industry and Civil Life; British Commonwealth of Nations; U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Poland and other Allies.

#### DETAILED FIGURES SEPTEMBER 1941 TO AUGUST 1942

##### 1. 16 mm. Mobile Units

In September 1941, there were 72 16-mm. units working. Additional units were put out as equipment came through and by August 1942, 107 16-mm. units were working. Figures for the year were as follows:—

	1941-42	1940-41	Percentage increase over 1940-41
Units working	107	72	50%
Operational weeks	4,218	2,599	62%
Shows given	37,940	20,668	83%
Total Audience	6,688,742	3,130,374	113%
Average audience	175	151	16%

These figures show that the increase in the number of shows given and total audience was much greater proportionately than the increase in the number of units and the number of operational weeks.

##### 2. 35 mm. Mobile Units

The first two 35-mm. Mobile units were put out towards the end of the year. These units gave 112 shows to a total audience of 61,054 (average audience 545). Two 35-mm. daylight  
(continued on page 178)



## M.O.I. Report cont.

projection units were also used from time to time for series of shows in certain dockyards where 16-mm. units would not be efficient. The daylight vans can be stationed in the sheds where as many as 600 men may see the films during the midday break.

### 3. 35 mm. Shows in Cinemas

One thousand three hundred and two shows were given in public cinemas out of ordinary cinema hours to a total audience of 879,842 (average audience 677). This is three times the number of such shows given in 1940-41. About one-third of these shows were training shows arranged for Civil Defence personnel and Fire Guards, for the Ministry of Home Security; the shows were organised with the Civil Defence Controllers and cinemas were often loaned free. Many of the other shows were arranged to tie up with campaigns organised by Ministries of Labour, Health, Agriculture, Food.

### 4. Projectors on Loan

The scheme for lending projectors to public libraries, etc., which showed a programme of films every day in every other week was abandoned in December 1941, and all but three of the projectors were withdrawn and converted into mobile units. During three months 1,461 shows were given to a total audience of 151,767, an average audience of 104 at each show as against 82 for the previous year.

### 5. Total Non-Theatrical Audience 1941-42

The total audience reached by all the non-theatrical showings was more than 12 million made up as follows:—

16-mm. units	6,688,742
35-mm. units	61,054

35-mm. daylight units	80,871
Shows in cinemas	879,842
Loaned projectors	151,767
Central Film Library	4,500,000
	12,362,276

It must be stressed that this figure is the total audience, *not* a total number of individuals, since many audiences have several shows during the year. On the other hand it should be noted that every person in this total audience at each show has not seen a single film but a programme of films lasting 30 to 80 minutes.

### 6. Central Film Library

The Central Film Library, London (with the Scottish Central Film Library and the Film Library of the South-West) lent Ministry of Information films to 3,476 separate organisations and individuals with their own projectors. To these borrowers the Library made a total of 48,599 bookings as compared with 16,295 for 1940-41, an increase of 200 per cent. Of this total the Scottish Central Film Library made 3,498 bookings and the Film Library of the South West made 3,924 bookings. These bookings represent 147,680 showings of the films lent, since a large part of the films are booked for showing on several consecutive days to different audiences before being returned. Borrowers borrow one to five or six films for showing at a time. If an average programme is taken as being three films it may be said that 147,680 showings represent 45,000 showings of a three-film programme. The average audience at these showings is 100. The total audience for Ministry of Information films reached by the loan of films from the Library was four and a half million...

The Central Film Library incorporates the pre-war Empire and G.P.O. Film Libraries which lend out educational films about the Overseas Empire and the United Kingdom. The bookings of all films from the Central Film Library (but excluding the sub-libraries) were as follows:

	1941-42	1940-41
Ministry of Information	41,177	15,525
G.P.O. ... ..	6,393	4,705
Empire ... ..	34,048	26,856
	81,618	47,086

The Central Film Library also supplies and services films issued to the Ministry of Information Regional Officers for use on the mobile units and at shows in public cinemas. Including these despatches the Library made 88,273 despatches during 1941-42 as against 52,986 in the previous year.

The four catalogues issued by the Central Film Library list 750 films as follows:—

Ministry of Information: sound films (films produced September 1940–November 1942) ... ..	332
Ministry of Information: Silent Films Overseas Empire (films made before 1940) ... ..	245
United Kingdom (films made before 1940, excluding G.P.O. films) ...	147
	749

(Films shown on the Ministry's mobile units and in public cinema shows arranged by the Ministry are drawn only from the Ministry of Information catalogue).

7. The total number of borrowers of Ministry of Information and Empire films from the Central Film Library, and of borrowers of Ministry of Information films only from two sub-libraries was 5,509. The 3,476 borrowers of Ministry of Information films have been divided into categories as follows:—

	16 mm.	16 mm.	35 mm.	TOTAL
	sound	silent	sound	
Adult organisations...	368	95	76	539
Local Authorities ...	351	56	73	480
Factories & Business houses ... ..	212	41	20	273
Churches ... ..	173	45	1	219
Youth Organisations	294	65	28	387
Allotment Societies, etc. ... ..	83	12	5	100
Hospitals ... ..	36	6	18	60
Prisons ... ..	23	1	2	26
Women's Institutes & other women's organisations ...	39	17	6	62
Individuals showing to all kinds of organisations ... ..	91	18	7	116
Army Units ... ..	222	13	45	280
Home Guard Units...	50	12	9	71
R.A.F. Stations ...	122	6	25	153
Royal Observer Corps	21	2	7	30
Naval Units ... ..	12	3	9	24
Schools (Secondary & public) ... ..	258	73	19	350
Schools (senior and elementary) ...	179	125	2	306
	2,534	590	352	4,476

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo of a stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Cinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2

# FILM OF THE MONTH—"NINE MEN"

**Nine Men.** Production: Ealing Studios and Michael Balcon. Direction: Harry Watt. Length: 6,100 ft.

One of the best remarks about *Nine Men* was made by C. A. Lejeune and it was a great compliment both to Harry Watt and John Grierson. She said "Harry Watt was trained by John Grierson and when Grierson trains anyone they stay trained!" It is a compliment to Watt because *Nine Men* is the purest of the pure imaginative documentaries. It is a compliment to Grierson because about twenty years ago he conceived the idea and found the basis for working it out not only for himself, but for a lot of other people as well. Compliments are, of course, also due to Michael Balcon, and to Cavalcanti in particular.

Watt started in the film business nearly ten years ago. Before that he had been an assistant in the stock room in a threepenny and sixpenny store. Before that he had done a voyage to Newfoundland on a sailing ship, and, as neither the mate nor the captain had the slightest idea of navigation, he had a good idea what Government film sponsorship was like long before he had anything to do with it. Before the sailing ship he had a rubber ball factory. His father had left him some money and Watt thought that the best thing he could do would be to invest it in some commercial affair, make some money quickly and then stand for Parliament, preferably for a country constituency. All went well—he found an inventor, and with Watt supplying the money and his chum the brains, they started to make large rubber balls out of old motorcar tyres. Finally came the day when he had a factory full of balls and no more money. So putting down all the money that had been spent on one side, and the number of rubber balls they had made on the other, they divided the money by the balls and arrived at a figure to sell the balls at. Simple but primitive. The answer was about ten bob each. As similar balls were already selling for sixpence, Watt decided it might be better to try the hard way of making money and that's how he came to be on a sailing ship some weeks later.

## Film Career

But to get back to films, Watt joined the E.M.B. in 1932. After a year and a half as an assistant he made *Radio Interference* which was a simple and successful instructional. Then *Droitwich*, 6,30 Collection, *Night Mail*, *The Sailing of Bill Blewett*, a number of English items or March of Time—and after that *North Sea*. He produced some of the G.P.O. films: worked on *The First Days*, directed *Squadron 992*, *London Can Take It*, *Christmas Under Fire*, and his last Ministry film, *Target for Tonight*. After a brief interlude with the War Office he moved on to Ealing and at Ealing made a film that he could never have made for a government department.

*Nine Men* is an honest film—and that's a thing you can say about very few. Perhaps it is this honesty which has made some of the critics a bit worried about it. *Nine Men* doesn't have any truck with story formulae or love interest, and its characters not only behave like human beings, but behave also with that casualness and natural *savoir-faire* which in any film actor's conspicuous only by its absence.

If you doubt the honesty of *Nine Men*, you can

easily find it confirmed by the two points where it is not honest. Firstly, in Watt's failure to avoid the cliché of returning to his opening sequence in order to frame the "flash-back" which is the bulk of the film; this merely makes the end of the story redundant, and one feels it in the direction. Secondly, there is one brief shot in the middle of the film when the wounded man—dolorious—sees another's head framed in his steel helmet like a halo and shouts "Are there Saints in Hell?" or words to that effect. Maybe that has actually happened in real life—there may be lots of evidence for it—but the fact remains that it bursts into the truthful atmosphere of the film like a road house in paradise and gives the impression of having been popped in by some little Pinewood highbrow or other.

Other people have described the film as naive

—a word often used by those who find that things true to life are not palatable. It is naive if naïveté includes entire absence of concession to the alleged charms of the box office, resulting in a box office pull caused by the public recognising itself and its friends and relations taking part in the war with an active and understanding courage.

*Nine Men* only tells one story and says only one thing. This it does with modesty as well as skill. Twenty films of a similar scale and with a similarly sensible approach—and dealing with subjects less immediately spectacular—would put the M.O.I. out of business in a few weeks. But there, the Studios haven't any more sense than the M.O.I., and not many more Watts or potential Watts, so things will no doubt go on the same way.

## Casting "Nine Men"

### by Harry Watt

Lots of people have been asking me about the casting of the nine principals in *Nine Men*. This is very complimentary because it means that people have found them real and have wondered where such types of actors or whatever you like to call them are to be found for British films. I should say that there are plenty around, but you've got to look hard for them and know what you want.

One great advantage in casting a film like *Nine Men* is to have worked very closely on the script and dialogue. During all of this you are creating the characters and the personalities, and by the time you have finished you have a perfect mind picture of exactly what your character is like. You then go ahead and find the nearest human approximation to your imaginary figure. If you can get one that fits almost exactly, then you've won half the battle of getting the character on the screen. Your mind-man has walked, talked and reacted to situations while you've been creating him. Just get your real character to behave in almost the same way and you've got your script coming to life.

With regard to *Nine Men*. From the beginning there was no intention of using non-actors. It was never an official film. Although the War Office approved the script, the film was a Michael Balcon, Ealing Studios venture. We could not therefore expect any more facilities than those granted in the ordinary way to a commercial undertaking. Releases from the Army to act are only granted to men who were actors in Civvy Street. So if we wanted Army men, they had to be actors. In general, I didn't go for actors, so outside the Army we looked for people to fit the characters, with or without acting experience.

The sergeant was the central figure. We decided to go after him first. We tested a couple of actors who have played many "tough guy" parts in British films. But to me they were disastrous. They turned the sergeant into a kind of Gestapo man with a phoney cockney accent. The sergeant, by the way, was originally written as a cockney. We then tried a physical training instructor who

had been a music-hall turn. But he showed up the limitations of the amateur. We tried a sergeant-major newly back from Libya. He not only couldn't act, but he told us all the time how rotten our script was! We tried two more actors. One was too R.A.D.A. for words, and the other looked as though he'd expect his uniform to be made by Norman Hartnell. We decided to leave the sergeant for a bit and try the other characters. The second most important character was Jock Scott, an ex-Glasgow policeman. And here I was on happier ground. Eleven years ago I saw a magnificent performance of Barrie's "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," by the Ardrossan and Saltcoats Players. All the time I'd been writing of Jock Scott I'd been thinking of Private Dowie. So obviously the man who created that character so vividly for me was the man to find. By incredible roundabout routes too long to describe, we found him as a Major in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, ensconced in a tent in the Gramplins! He was Jack Lambert. After his amateur success he became a professional actor and made quite a career on the stage. But for some crazy reason film people hardly used him. I believe it was because of his Scots accent! He'd got more virility, dignity and appearance than ten of the average British film men, but he didn't try to kid the public by his accent that he'd been to Oxford. So he couldn't be used!

Anyway, to get back to casting. We asked Lambert to come down for a test for the Jock Scott character.

He grabbed 48 hours and came down. He was so perfect as Jock Scott that we immediately tested him as the sergeant. With a couple of chairs and a hat-stand as background he immediately created the atmosphere of our army hut. Our first big headache was over. We'd found the sergeant. It only meant transposing the dialogue a bit to Scots. The rest of the parts remained. Jock Scott came first. I remembered a big tough Edinburgh man who played the preacher in *The Edge of the World*. I'd seen a glimpse of him in Michael Powell films since. So we started our Sherlock Holmes act again and found him as a captain instructor at a battle

(continued on page 180)

## Casting "Nine Men" cont.

school in Sussex. When he turned up for testing we found to our delight that the Army had made him even tougher and bigger than he'd been before. Stripped to the waist, he looked terrific. So we played him that way throughout the film. It's a good thing he was tough or he'd have died of cold on our "desert" location!

The other parts were easier to fill. An ex-sergeant of the Durham Light Infantry came along to see me one day with his escape story from Germany. The idea was that it might make a film. We didn't use his story, but we cast him as the lorry driver. His Army experience was invaluable because he took the non-army members of the cast in an hour's arms drill every day to make them soldierly. He'd never acted before and never will again, because he's now joined our production side as an assistant director.

Gordon Jackson, who had been lucky enough to have his first film part under Cavalcanti and Charles Frend, in *The Foreman Went to France*, was an obvious choice for the young soldier. His character as written was tougher than the way it was played. He was originally planned as a corner-boy type, but I soon found that it was Jackson's puppy-like quality on the screen that was his biggest appeal, so let him play it as himself. The old sweat was just as obviously Bill Blewett, that postmaster of Mousehole who is one of Britain's greatest character actors. Why he has never been exploited more I cannot imagine. Accent again perhaps. But I remember Cavalcanti saying after we had finished Bill's first film, *The Saving of Bill Blewett*. "If we had the influence and the money we could make that man the English Wallace Beery." And that was

eight years ago. Since then Bill has stolen about four documentary films and then gone on post-mastering.

The cockney part of Banger Hill was the only other one that caused any trouble. I tested an amateur from the N.F.S. but by this time was beginning to realise that, for a feature, technical acting skill was an asset and a help. So we got Fred Piper, another of the many really excellent small part actors which have never had a real break. The ease with which he played his part was a revelation, and an immense help to the less experienced members of the cast. The middle-class boy was Cav's idea. I have such an antipathy to the so-called conventional good-class accent as used almost exclusively on the West End stage, that I ignored the fact that the middle-class are fighting this war as well. It was a bad mistake, and the inclusion of Eric Micklewood as "The Booky" gave the film greater width and appeal.

### Successful Experiment

Summing up, the casting of *Nine Men* was, for me, an experiment, which consensus of opinion seems to think came off. To carry parts in a story film of an hour or more needs experience. Either that, or the immense natural acting abilities of a Bill Blewett, which are so rare that it can be discounted. Professional actors are therefore necessary. The job is to find those that are human beings and have not lost contact with life because of the necessarily artificial life they lead. That such actors do exist is proved by the existence of Jack Lambert and Fred Piper. But in British films, in direct opposition to French films, they have been largely ignored. It is here that, I think, we can begin establishing a real British film movement. Let us ignore our established British stage stars and create new film ones. Actors and actresses that are real people and that can create real people. Actors and actresses that speak decent basic English and are not ashamed of the country of their origin. Actors and actresses to project to the world true portrayals of life in Britain. If the documentary movement is going to influence the British film industry permanently, it must have documentary actors. The glamour of seeing the real people doing the real job has become outworn. This problem was solved in French films, so there's no reason why it shouldn't be done here.

### The Ego of the Actor

It's not easy, of course. Acting is a pernicious profession. Aldous Huxley sums it up in "Ends and Means" when he says . . . "Acting is one of the most dangerous of trades. It is the rarest thing to find a player who has not had his character affected for the worse by the practice of his profession. Nobody can make a habit of self-exhibition, nobody can exploit his personality for the sake of exercising a kind of hypnotic power over others, and remain untouched by the process. . . . Acting inflames the ego in a way which few other professions do. For the sake of enjoying regular emotional self-abuse, our societies condemn a considerable number of men and women to a perpetual inability to achieve non-attachment. It seems a high price to pay for our amusements."

The solution for this is not to allow our actors to segregate themselves. They must be made to mix with the people. They must be sent to live amongst miners if the film is about mines. They must know how to handle and fire a rifle if they are soldiers. Their performances must come out of life and not be superimposed upon it.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 11-12

NOV.-DEC. 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London**, in association with **American Film Center, New York**.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

Owned and published by

**FILM CENTRE LTD.**  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1

GERRARD 4253

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SPRING ISSUE

MOVIES IN MALTA  
NEWS FROM BELGIUM  
THE FILM STRIP

6d.

Published by

**THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,**  
4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Common Cause.** Production: Verity Films Ltd. Producers: Max Munden and Derek de Marney. Director: Henry Cass. Camera: Eric Cross. Editor: Peter Tanner. 8 minutes. M.O.I. Non-T.

**Subject:** The not-so-obvious links between citizens of the United Nations.

**Treatment:** This film brings together in fortuitous pairs the men of different races who are fighting fascism on widely dispersed fronts. In China an airman of the Republic talks with an American transport flyer; in a North Russian port the pilot talks with the skipper of the British cargo-boat he has just brought safely into harbour. The script is ingenious and the acting adequate. The protagonists find that in spite of the superficial differences in day to day habit, they share fundamental decencies, the defence of which has brought them together.

**Propaganda Value:** This is a worth-while film. A difficult subject has been tackled bravely and if it has not completely come off the reason appears to lie in the occasionally naïve (or timid) avoidance of the real differences between Russians, Americans, Englishmen and Chinese. These we surely ignore at our ultimate peril, however convenient it may be to do so at the moment.

**Inside Fighting Russia.** National Film Board of Canada. Running Time: 20 minutes.

**Subject:** A résumé of recent Russian history ranging from Czarist times up to the present, showing how in this country a new spirit has grown up which can be found nowhere else in the world. The film seeks to demonstrate why this has happened. *Inside Fighting Russia* belongs to the first batch of releases in Britain of the *Front of Action* series which is produced by the National Film Board of Canada and has been in distribution for many months in Canada and the United States.

**Treatment:** The style employed borrows generously from the *March of Time* but the effect achieved is infinitely more powerful than *March of Time* has managed in recent years. There is the short vigorous cutting and the ominously authoritative transatlantic voice with which we have long been familiar, but the voice has something to say which few other films from he democracies are daring to put into words and the visuals have a cutting edge which *March of Time* lost long ago.

Few of the shots are new but they are skillfully arranged to reveal just why Hitler (and many democrats too) were so fantastically wrong in their guesses about Soviet military power. We first see Russia from the outside—from the point of view of the foreign military or lay observer, and we see how this edifice of political hypocrisy (as it seemed to many people) does not collapse at the first puff from the big bad wolf. Then—to explain the mystery—we go inside and see what Russia has been doing for these last twenty years, not primarily in the military field, but in the field of developing human dignity. From this point we are carried on to the inevitable conclusion that Russia's military strength is a by-product of her progress in her social services, her culture, her economics and

her communal *joie de vivre*. "Russia is strong" says the commentator finally, "because Russia has a faith."

**Propaganda Value:** This is the kind of film needed not in occasional single releases but in a flood. Such films not only will enable "people to speak unto people", but will point the way to the development of the only sure war-winning weapon—a developing philosophy which is strong enough to face the post-war future.

**Save Your Own Seeds.** Realist Film Unit. Direction: Margaret Thompson. Camera: A. E. Jeakins. Commentator: Roy Hay. A M.O.I. film for gardeners. 17 mins. Non-T.

**Subject:** Make this year's vegetable plot give you the seeds for next year's sowing.

**Treatment:** In the hurly-burly of film production the purely instructional type of film is often overlooked. It is possible, though, that it is the most important work being done in the short film field at the moment. *Save Your Own Seeds* is a straightforward account of how the ordinary gardener can provide seeds for the following year. It's easy and it's sensible. Miss Thompson has a mastery touch. Every point is made clearly and concisely and is so well put across that it will stick in the mind. And this is done by purely cinematic means. Jeakins' camera work illuminates the processes.

**Instructional Value:** Excellent. This is a model instructional film.

**Clean Milk.** Realist Film Unit. Direction: Margaret Thompson. Camera: A. E. Jeakins. Commentator: Roy Hay. A M.O.I. film for farmers. 15 mins. Non-T.

**Subject:** Encouraging farmers to provide clean milk for the good of the nation, as well as for their own profit.

**Treatment:** To the non-farmer this film can only be rather a dull screen excursion into the cowbyre. The film is made with the lucidity and technical mastery which characterises Miss Thompson's work but, when all is shown, it is mainly a matter of cleaning—udders, buckets, suction cups, tubes, and all the other paraphernalia of milking.

**Instructional Value:** That depends on the farmers. Incidentally, the film is enough to put you off milk for a long time.

**Invisible?** Production: U.S. Army Signal Corps with the M.O.I. and British Movietone News. M.O.I. 15 mins.

**Subject:** A captured enemy newsreel, issued by the Germans in French, for circulation in North Africa, turned into a propaganda film for Britain.

**Treatment:** The newsreel has been taken as it stands—French titles and commentary included. Over the French voice is superimposed the familiar voice of Leslie Mitchell translating the German propaganda into English. At the end of each German claim the English commentator answers it, and his answer is illustrated with shots from our newsreels. Stalingrad is falling, says the French voice. The Russians are sweeping forward from Stalingrad, says the English. India will rise against Britain. India is in the war with us says Mr. Mitchell. Rommel is about to sweep

across Egypt and join up with the German armies who are victoriously moving down from Russia: the answer to this one was almost too easy.

The shrinking, sensitive ones will hate this film. It is vulgar and not-quite-the-sort-of-thing, old man; but thank the Lord for a bit of punch at last and if people will wear their belts round their necks they mustn't mind being fouled. But if the Ministry are going at last to start hitting hard they must be more careful. The whole Indian sequence was, as usual, bungled. The German voice implied that India was prepared to rise against us and form the third part of the pincer movement. This threw our commentator into a panic and he became entirely unconvincing. Surely the thing to have done would have been either to emphasise Wavell and the British Indian Army or to say that Japan helped to solve the problem for us by splitting Indian opinion.

And why call the film "Invisible?" However often you cross out a word on the screen its effect remains in the mind. To end on "Invisible" written in large letters was surely a major blunder. Somewhere, at the back of the mind, the two words Germany and Invisible are now securely wedded.

**Propaganda Value:** Excellent except for the two points mentioned. Maybe everyone knew it all before, but repetition is a basic part of propaganda, and the film is lively, novel and stimulating.

**The Freedom of Aberfeldy.** Production: Alan Harper. Made in co-operation with Service men from the Dominions and the people of Aberfeldy. Camera: Henry Cooper. M.O.I. 10 mins. **Subject:** The villagers of Aberfeldy decide to throw their houses open to men in the Forces from overseas.

**Treatment:** This is a pleasant, naïve little film with a delightful feeling about it. It is pleasantly shot and beautifully commentated as though by the three men whose visit to Aberfeldy is the subject of the film. They are an Australian soldier, a New Zealand pilot and a Canadian sailor, who find in Aberfeldy and in the hearts of its people an echo of their own homes.

**Propaganda value:** Good, because it's human.

**Garden Friends and Foes.** Production: G.B. Instructional. Director: D. Catling. Commentator: E. V. H. Emmett. A M.O.I. film for gardeners. 10 mins. Non-T.

**Subject:** The pests that can attack the vegetable crop of the average gardener and how to deal with them.

**Treatment:** Couldn't be better. The film packs information and belly laughs without losing any of its points. Non-gardeners will enjoy it, gardeners will learn from it. Emmett has seldom been in better form and the film is a triumph for all concerned.

**Instructional Value:** First rate.

**London 1942.** Green Park Productions for the British Council. Production: Ralph Keene. Direction: Ken Annakin.

**Subject:** London in the year of war 1942.

**Treatment:** The face of London has changed without our noticing it very much. Even the bomb-

(continued on page 182)



## New Documentary Films cont.

damage has fallen into its place and no longer shocks. To a returning visitor it must look a new city. This feeling of surprise, of making the things we take for granted stand out, has been cleverly caught by this film.

Allotments in Park Lane, coupons for clothes, music in picture galleries, serving yourself at lunch, miniature lakes at street corners and pigs in a turning off Oxford Street, this is the London we have come to accept as normal.

The director has caught it all very nicely and turned it into a useful record. As a point of particular congratulation we would mention the superb shot of Americans marching through the ruined city.

This is Annakin's first picture and few directors can have made a more auspicious start.

*Propaganda Value:* The film will be of interest to home audiences, but overseas its use will be of great importance. Everyone abroad wants to know what London looks like during the war. The slightly nostalgic feeling should go down well in the outposts.

**Mr. and Mrs. America.** March of Time, Volume 8, No. 8.

*Subject:* America's Home Front.

*Treatment:* The main part of this film is in the form of a letter from an American father to his son in the Forces and tells the son of what America is doing to win the war. It was a nice idea, but Dad, unfortunately, is no Madame de Sevigné. Humdrum is the word for Dad and the picture is pretty humdrum too. Maybe this is because it looks like one of our own early propaganda films. The anti-Roosevelt smear is cleverly done but seems rather silly. Probably Dad is a subtle Republican as well as a bit of a bore.

**Summer on the Farm.** Production: Verity Films, Green Park Unit. *Direction:* Ralph Keene. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. *Camera:* Raymond Elton. *Editor:* Julian Wintle. *Music:* William Alwyn. *M.O.I. Length:* 1,105 ft.

*Subject:* Farm work in summer and how a big town gets its vegetables.

*Treatment:* Ralph Keene started his agricultural year with a brilliant winter and followed it with an excellent spring. But now, his boots clogged with mud, he has fallen into the summer manure heap. The hard work and sparseness of winter gave his early film a tautness and toughness; the promise of spring sent him merrily on his way, but summer's fulfillment seems to have clogged and nauseated his spirits. Gone is everything except competence, and she is a sad companion for a film maker. All the usual things are there and the sequences showing how the town is supplied should have been interesting but they turn out to be merely informative. However, summer will pass and with the autumn we wish Mr. Keene a return to his former brilliance.

*Propaganda value:* Routine informational stuff.

[*Note.*—We hope all farmers are taking courses in film making—they had better have a second string ready for the day when documentary moves in on them entirely and, in Soho Square, a Farm Centre appears.]

### Trailers

*Rubber Salvage:* Films of Great Britain Ltd.

*Sorting Salvage:* Spector.

*Salvage of Tin Tubes:* Realist.

*Save your Bacon:* McDougall and MacKendrick.

*Chicken Feed:* Spector.

*Diphtheria 1:* Rotha Films.

*Diphtheria 2:* Rotha Films.

*Women's Industrial Recruiting:* Films of Great Britain Ltd.

*The Way to His Heart:* Strand.

*Five-inch Bath:* Public Relationship Films.

*Blackout Sense:* Rotha Films.

*Planned Cropping:* Realist.

If there were any flowers about we would make up a bouquet for the Ministry. Lacking gardenias we can only raise our rather old hats. Reason for this celebration? Ministry of Information trailers, of course. John Baines, in charge of this section, is building a fantastic world of talking chickens, men with Plimsoll lines on their legs, dissolving toothpaste tubes, old-time movies and strange gardens where Father Time lays lies on dead gardeners. In this world Dali and Ripley walk hand in hand in the cause of propaganda. Each trailer is about one and a quarter minutes and goes on at the end of the newscast in every cinema. Its job is to put one brief message across with a punch.

Basil Radford is seen pinching old tyres and rubber gloves—Save Your Rubber—a Japanese skull groans over the capture of the Malayan tin mines—Save Your Toothpaste Tubes—a child is killed in an air raid—Immunise Your Children Against Diphtheria, and so on. Every sort of technique is used, cartoon, model and mystery as well as human beings. On the whole the humans are the less successful. Who wants to listen to a housewife when you can hear a talking hen? In these brief nightmares there can be no false notes, no hesitation, no slipshoddy, every frame must count. The trick stuff packs more punch, gets a clearer message across and is more entertaining. This group of trailers is a good job, imaginatively and excitingly done.

**When We Build Again.** Production: Strand for Cadbury Bros. *Direction:* Ralph Bond. *Photography:* Charles Marlborough. Based on the Bourville Housing Trust Survey. Theatrical and non-theatrical. 25 minutes.

*Subject:* Rehousing.

*Treatment:* The great merit of this film is its honesty. Rehousing is an appallingly complicated business, and Ralph Bond has firmly resisted the temptation to whittle it all down to some comfortably simple, facile solution.

Within the framework of three soldiers on leave boarding a train to travel to their three different homes, the film shows the three main types of life that have grown up in the cities: the slum back streets round the city centre, the dreary terraced rows further out in the suburbs and the dispersed estate houses on the city outskirts. By means of interviews with different people the film shows the advantages and disadvantages of each type—the dirt and inconvenience of the slum, the suburban terrace making the worst of both worlds, with its damp, its high rents and its lack of back-street 'matiness' and the hygienic sterilised estate houses where it's over a mile's walk to get a drink and it takes more than an hour a day and 6s. a week travelling to and from work. Then an architect steps forward and shows how he would redesign an already built-up area, and how he would plan a new town. Finally the film reviews various housing experiments that have tried to overcome some of the difficulties, and ends with the plea that the people deserve nothing but the best and should get it.

Technically, the film is nicely shot and its straightforwardness and lack of pretensions are a pleasure in these latter days of crawling to authority and would-be artiness. Not enough trouble, however, has been taken to work the material into film shape. Granted the subject is a difficult one, but if no better picture can be found to accompany long stretches of commentary than a pan over parkland or the pages of a book turning, it would be better to leave them out altogether, or somehow fitter it round into film terms. Also much of the music is not at all suitable and the opening sequence is an example of something one had hoped had been buried for good and all long ago—an impressionist sequence of people in cities accompanied by a hectoring would-be poetic commentary.

But the honesty of the film—its sticking to hard facts—easily makes up for its faults and its rather unwieldy shape. For years we've had to listen to the middle-class technocrats, the Corbuses, Gropiuses, Mendelsohns and Lloyd Wrights of this world, telling us what they were going to give us to live in, and that we should be duly thankful. In a large number of cases their plans were based on nothing much more than some personal weakness or middle-class prejudice, the classic example being H. G. Wells, because he himself suffers from colds, planning for us all to live in air-conditioned towns under the ground. Well, this film will have none of that nonsense: it goes firmly straight to the people who would have to live in those abortions and tries to find out what they think they want. There's a stout old dame who doesn't want to leave the friendly warmth of her slum street, and a magnificent Mr. Dugmore who would like to meet the arch-tee that designed the block of flats he has to live in, where a penny dropped in one room reverberates like the noise of a shipyard through the whole block. As the film points out, and as anyone knows who has taken the trouble to find out, flats are not popular: 90 per cent of the tenants would prefer estate houses. The film is careful to show, however, that much of the unpopularity of flats is due to bad design and shoddy workmanship, and this can largely be overcome by such schemes as the fine Quarry Hill Estate at Leeds, where there are lifts and an astonishing system of central plughole rubbish collection. Incidentally the Labour Council of Leeds was sabotaged right and left over the building of these flats by the Tories, and even to-day (because of the war) they are still unfinished.

Are estate houses the solution then? In spite of the man who complains of the time and expense of getting to work and of the lack of a pub, the film seems in the end to suggest that they are, though it is careful not to say so direct. And yet in peace time there was always a far greater waiting list for the little two-storey terrace houses of Poplar and Stepney ("the slums") than for the bright clean houses of the L.C.C. Becontree estate. And the reason for this is something that the film does not touch on, something that cannot be found by the too-simple short cut of asking people individually what they think they want—the answers never really add up. What decides how people want to live and in what sort of houses is all bound up with that much-flogged word, "community," which in the old days meant the life of the street, and still does in the slums. Until people have made up their minds what new sort

(continued on page 184)

No. 10

## THE CRANE AND THE CRAW-FISH


 RFU

A Crane had once settled her habitation by the side of a broad and deep lake, and lived upon such fish as she could catch in it; these she got in plenty enough for many years; but at length having become old and feeble, she could fish no longer. In this afflicting circumstance she began to reflect, with sorrow, on the carelessness of her past years: "I did ill," said she to herself, "in not making in my youth necessary provision to support me in my old age; but, as it is, I must now make the best of a bad market, and use cunning to get a livelihood as I can." With this resolution she placed herself by the water-side, and began to sigh and look mighty melancholy. A Craw-fish, perceiving her at a distance, accosted her, and asked her why she appeared so sad? "Alas," said she, "how can I otherwise choose but grieve, seeing my daily nourishment is like to be taken from me? for I just now heard this talk between two fishermen passing this way: said one to the other, 'Here is great store of fish, what think you of clearing this pond?' to whom his companion answered, 'No; there is more in such a lake: let us go thither first, and then come hither the day afterwards.' This they will certainly perform; and then," added the Crane, "I must soon prepare for death."

The Craw-fish, on this, went to the fish, and told them what he had heard: upon which the poor fish, in great perplexity, swam immediately to the Crane, and addressing themselves to her, told her what they had heard, and added, "We are now in so great a consternation that we are come to desire your advice." To which the Crane replied, "That which you acquaint me with, I heard myself from the mouths of fishermen; we have no power sufficient to withstand them; nor do I know any other way to secure you but this: it will be many months before they can clear the other pond; and, in the meantime, I can at times, and as my strength will permit me, remove you one after another into a little pond here hard by, where there is very good water, and where the fishermen can never catch you, by reason of the extraordinary depth." The fish approved this counsel, and desired the Crane to carry them one by one into this pond. Nor did she fail to fish up three or four every morning, but she carried them no farther than to the top of a small hill, where she ate them: and thus she feasted herself for a while.

But one day, the Craw-fish, having a desire to see this delicate pond, made known his curiosity to the Crane, who, bethinking herself that the Craw-fish was her most mortal enemy, resolved to get rid of him at once, and murder him as she had done the rest: with this design she flung the Craw-fish upon her neck, and flew towards the hill. But when they came near the place, the Craw-fish, spying at a distance the small bones of his slaughtered companions, mistrusted the Crane's intention, and laying hold of a fair opportunity, got her neck in his claw, and grasped it so hard, that he fairly saved himself, and strangled the Crane.

REALIST FILM UNIT  
47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

## The Workers' Film Association

THE Workers' Film Association claims that it is the outcome of the foresight and planning of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party five years ago. It is the realisation of their belief that their ideals could best be communicated to the public by means of film. In the first year a small library was installed, nine films made, and a number of sound projectors sold. In the next year, however, progress was retarded by the war, conditions making it difficult to arrange film shows. It was decided to carry on with a nucleus staff.

Next year however, when Soviet Russia came into the war, a large number of Soviet sub-standard sound films, edited for distribution in Britain, were handled by the Workers Film Association. Necessary reorganisation was completed and the Association registered as a Co-operative Society. After a full year's work, in spite of the fact that some of the services provided were offered at half the trade price, the annual balance sheet showed a surplus of £1,000.

In addition to Soviet films, Czechoslovak, Chinese, Polish and Norwegian films were distributed. *Our Film*, a contribution to the war effort and an appreciation of the heroic struggle of the Soviet people, made by the film workers at Denham Studios, was also exclusively distributed by the Association. The library was increased by films produced by the Film Department of the London Co-operative Society, the five London Co-operative Societies, the Woodcraft Folk, the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. and Paole Zion.

During the year film schools, conferences and special film exhibitions were arranged for film students. Mobile units gave nearly 550 shows at workers' organisations which included a series of conferences arranged by the Trades Union Congress, and a series of one week's showings by Co-operative Societies. Altogether 13,672 reels were distributed during the year.

A series of full length feature films was added to the Library and now it lists over 600 films. Agents were appointed all over the country and a branch library established in Scotland under the auspices of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd.

Negotiations instituted to incorporate the Co-operative Union Ltd. in the Association, had to be withdrawn owing to wartime conditions, but the National Association of Co-operative Education Committees Ltd. and the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. applied for and received full membership.

An advisory committee was appointed to assist the management committee in making known the Workers' Film Association's services. The Workers' Travel Association Ltd. and the Holiday Fellowship Ltd. joined the advisory committee, and as a result the Association was invited to provide weekly programmes of films at their hostels on behalf of the Ministry of Supply.

Sound projectors were provided for the General and Municipal Workers Union and the Slough Co-operative Society while other societies have placed deposits with the Association for projectors as soon as they become available.

A series of short films have been ordered by several Co-operative Societies.

J. Reeves

## British Film Role in America, cont.

Another important rôle we should be playing is in the detailing of our own war experiences to the people of America who are now beginning to go through very similar experiences. Rationing, in many aspects, now looms large there. As far as we know, no films have been sent across detailing to U.S. families the way in which British families have adjusted their lives; to all sorts of restrictions on food, fuel, etc. Yet such films would surely find a market in the States and would be welcomed as contributions to local morale as well as being good British propaganda.

Furthermore, we should always remember that material (uncut) is saleable as well as completed films (many of which, as we have seen, are not). The present U.S. film representative, George Archibald, is believed to realise this point, which incidentally involves quite drastic considerations. For instance, if a prestige documentary six reels in length won't sell *quickly*, it should be regarded as a collection of material, and placed all across the U.S. market via the newsreels, the various shorts series, and so on. British material is better on the screen than in the can.

There are, to be fair to the M.O.I., some achievements in regard to the U.S. problem. Highly specialised films, which concentrate on information and carry their propaganda message by implication, have for some time been encouraged. Some of these, rightly, are for highly specialised audiences, others for wider use.

In general, however, the situation is still very unsatisfactory and is to be solved only by whole-time concentration by active and positive-minded people who are not afraid of making drastic decisions and insisting on their being carried out.

## Correspondence

DEAR SIR,

In the review of the New Documentary Films in the January number of the *Documentary News Letter*, it is stated that "Kill or be Killed" is "unfortunately only for non-theatrical circulation in this country".

This is not correct, as it is being shown by members of this Association from March 1st, onwards.

Bookings received so far are as follows:

Week commencing:

1st March, 1943 News Theatre, Leeds.

5th April, 1943 Topical News Theatre, Aberdeen.

3rd May, 1943 Tatler Theatre, Manchester.

31st May, 1943 Tatler Theatre, Chester.

5th July, 1943 News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Other non-theatrical films being shown by members are as follows:

*Paratroops, Street Fighting, Life Begins Again, Control Room.*

D. M. VAUGHAN,

General Secretary

## New Documentary Films, cont.

of community they intend to make of themselves, what they're going to do about the family for instance, or about economic equality, most architectural planning is a waste of time. *Propaganda Value*: Good. It states problems clearly and without patronage, and even if it offers no lead or solution, it will help people to think about the issues involved.



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MARCH, 1943

## CONTENTS

NOTES OF THE MONTH	186, 194
CRACKED VOICE OF PROPAGANDA	187
THEY LAUGH AT REALITY	188
TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH	189
THE FIRST DOCUMENTALIST	190
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	191
M.O.I. CATALOGUE OF FILMS	192-194

VOL 4 NO. 3

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

DOCUMENTARY has been a plant plagued, and a prey to disease, from the day the sun first shone on it; money troubles, distribution troubles and a hundred other pests have done their best to blacken the blossom in spring-time and curl the leaves in summer. But Documentary has kept going and its influence has kept spreading. Since the war we have collected several new pests and one of the worst is the Public Relation Officer.

There are over two hundred of them in the various civil ministries, in the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry. Their work as far as films are concerned is to promote ideas, to see that their department gets its fair share of films, to make sure that the department is properly represented in those films, and to provide the film makers with facilities. That is the basis of their work. Of course it can be widened out almost indefinitely, as in the case of the Ministry of Agriculture, whose P.R. department has initiated an enormous number of films, and spent a great deal of time and trouble on helping them to be made. But this is exceptional. Here are two examples, *not* exceptional, of how P.R.O.'s work. Everyone making films for the Government has had similar experiences.

For a Ministry of Information script an interview was needed with a seaman from a motor torpedo boat. No filming or anything complicated like that—just a talk, to get information. The M.O.I. gave the producers a contact with a member of the Admiralty Public Relations Department. Over the telephone he answered that he couldn't do anything without a letter. It was pointed out to him that he already had a letter from the M.O.I.; but apparently this wasn't full enough, he needed more details. As soon as the telephone call was finished a letter was despatched by hand. Next day he was rung again; yes, he'd got the letter, but it was not detailed enough: "Which sailor do you want to see?"

"How do you mean which sailor do we want to see?"

"Well, I can't fix you up with any sailor. I must have the name of the man you want to see."

"But look, we are a film company. We don't know any sailors on M.T.B.s."

"I'm sorry, but we must have that information before we can proceed."

The production company replied politely that they would

try, and sent someone to go through the back numbers of a newspaper. By this means they finally got the name of a sailor who had been decorated.

So the Admiralty were rung again and given the sailor's name. It sounds crazy but it's true. The P.R.O. replied that it would be very difficult to trace the man, could he be given three or four days. The producers said "Sure, and thanks very much". Four days later the Admiralty were rung again: "No, we're sorry, we haven't traced him yet. But ring us next week."

Five long weeks went by, with two or three calls a week. Then at the beginning of the sixth week the Admiralty rang and said "Can you send someone down to such and such a place on Saturday?" With a sigh of relief the company said "Yes".

On Thursday a jam occurred. The man who was supposed to go had to rush to Liverpool to see another sailor who was sailing on Saturday. Another call was put through to the Admiralty. The gentleman there was told politely what had happened and asked if it was possible to put off the appointment until Sunday.

At which he became exceedingly belligerent and said, "If you don't go on Saturday you can't go at all."

It was pointed out to him that the company had waited over six weeks for the job; and that the least he might do was to move it by one day. He replied that he was not going to ring up the dockyard again. After a short argument the producers said that they were sorry but they couldn't manage Saturday. The man in the P.R. office replied, "All right then, I'll cancel the whole affair!"

About ten minutes later the M.O.I. rang the producers, saying: "What's going on? X of the Admiralty has been on and said that you have let him down. And he says he'll see to it that your company doesn't get any more facilities from the Admiralty."

Well, that's how someone at the Admiralty is helping. First he was unable to get the name of a sailor. Second, six weeks delay on a simple job. Third, deliberate attempt to stop Government work (then and in the future) through personal pique.

The second story concerns someone at the Ministry of Home  
(continued on next page)



Security. The film concerned was a fifteen hundred footer to be offered for distribution to the M.O.I. The last sequence of the film was to be the story of firemen doing industrial work in their spare time. It was a simple enough story. After the blitz had died down the firemen got tired of sitting around. With the demand for increased production in the factories they thought it would be a good idea for each station to organise itself to do whatever work it could—such as making ammunition boxes and food boxes for the Middle East forces. There was a certain amount of opposition from the Ministry of Home Security; but in the end the scheme became quite successful, and the Ministry took it over officially. The story seemed to be simple, innocuous and quite good propaganda.

The film idea was put up to the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Home Security. The reply was that they would like a few alterations. The script was re-written and submitted and again they asked for alterations and suggested a different approach. Again the script was re-written and again it was submitted; this time it was announced that the Ministry did not approve of the sequence in any form whatsoever and would not provide the facilities without which it could not be shot. And that was that. *It had only taken seven weeks.*

It is a strange position. The P.R.O.s, if they were good—as they used to be—could move the mountains that would make film production possible. But instead, for three years, it has been a continual battle. One almost feels that any film that reaches the screen has been made despite these men and their organisations. And in the last six months there has been an even greater growth of this bureaucracy. The first stages of the war are over. Russia is more and more on the offensive; the Eighth Army has been victorious in North Africa; and, as always in such circumstances, the office wallahs and executives are gaining ascendancy over the people who actually have done the work. It is visible everywhere, in the services, in industry, in all sorts of odd places, and in films. Week by week the number of films cancelled or postponed grows in number. Five months' work on one film and it is indefinitely held up because of lack of co-operation from the Admiralty. Three months' work on another, and it is cancelled because agreement cannot be reached with the Ministry of Health. On most films there are weeks of delay involving long and pointless arguments—re-writing of scripts—endless conferences—committee meetings.

A lot of the blame must go to the Ministry of Information. They seldom make vigorous enough attempts to get over the difficulties. They are far too inclined to take the P.R.O.'s answers as final. A real Ministry of Information should, of course, have absolute control over all propaganda, with only a security control by other departments; but it is doubtful if we shall ever get as far as this—particularly since the M.O.I. does not seem too keen to take the responsibility even for its own small field.

Bureaucracy, and its attendant evils, has reduced the effect of film propaganda by half or maybe more; and there the matter stands. We have managed to muddle along for three and a half years, mainly because the film makers have had sufficient faith in films to go on making them despite all the obstructions. To-day obstruction has reached a new high level. It almost looks like a deliberate campaign to stop films being effective. Enquiries among producers seem to indicate that for every film finished there is another cancelled; and it is mostly the good films that are cancelled—or canned.

But as documentary has managed to survive other pests it will most likely survive this one. People like Watt and Cavalcanti are pushing out strong branches outside of bureaucratic control. Grierson has a paid circulation of 4,000 cinemas in North America and an organisation of 350 people in Canada making new and lively films.

For the people left inside the old units like Strand, Shell,

Rotha, Realist, and Crown, the main task seems to be to get on with the battle against bureaucracy. Contest every issue. If one script is cancelled get another written. Make as many films as possible that do not need Government facilities. Make as many films as possible outside of Government control. Bureaucracy hates us and our films. It hates the Watts, and the Cavalcantis, and their films. It hates especially the Griersons and their practical successes. But it has only laziness, inefficiency, lack of imagination and lack of courage to hate with; and as they say nowadays: "There's no future in it."

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### Dull Films and Good Women

IT SEEMS to us sometimes that Hollywood, the boisterous old hag, is getting a little tired. The wrinkles take a little longer to smooth out in the mornings and the arches are beginning to fall. It takes more effort now to do the old act and even when it's done it hasn't got the same sparkle. She still has her moments of course, perhaps when those two nice young men William Wyler and Orson Welles take her for a ride or when Ida Lupino and Bette Davies drop in for a *demi-tasse*, but things aren't what they were. It's the bright lights and gay music she misses. They give her ginger ale when she asks for champagne and a boiling fowl when she wants grouse. She's got the old ideas about what she wants, but the boys just can't give it any more. Her brightest comedies are beginning to remind her, and everyone else, of Auntie Elstree's musicals, circa 1936. She's having trouble with some of her girls too. Those promising sex queens are all turning into nice healthy American girls and she has to use those wicked continental women for her bedroom scenes. . . . What with the girls getting good and the films getting dull, its hard to keep the party going, and it's kind of morbid having to rely on Greer Garson all the time. After all Bob Hope and Fred Astaire can't keep the fun going for ever. So maybe she had better look around for some new and slightly gaye people or she will have to stop Miss Rogers doing a Duse all over the place and get her back into the party. She knows that people want to laugh, but its difficult to know what they want to laugh at. Sometimes, after one of those M.G.M. script conferences, she might even think they are laughing at her.

### D.A.K.

WE CONTINUE to hear from all sources (some of them most unexpected) an endless series of highly entertaining anecdotes about life in the Department of Army Kinematography. The jokes are always good but we cannot help sometimes feeling that the production and distribution of instructional films for the army should not be an entirely farcical matter. However, the recent widely circulated account of what qualifications are most likely to yield a commission in D.A.K. and the story about the showing of a highly secret film which was by accident thrown open to a goggle-eyed crowd of unauthorised persons, both are up to the best Wardour Street standards. Let us laugh while we may. It is a hard unfanciful world and the time cannot be far distant when sanity will prevail and a reconstituted D.A.K. will have nothing to do but really at long last to get down to its job.

### Soviet Films

WE HAVE been very pleased to receive an excellently produced catalogue of the Soviet films available in Britain. It comes from the Soviet Film Agency at the Soviet Embassy and not only lists and briefly describes the films but also provides complete information on how they may be obtained. The sources range from the M.O.I. to the R.S.P.C.A. and include several commercial distributors. The films are listed in seven categories. There are feature films, short war films, music and art films, garden films, news-reels from the front, general news films and a miscellaneous list which contains such varied titles as *The Five Men of Velish*, *Glimpses of Soviet Science* and *Bread Bakery and Confectionery*. Many of the films may be

(continued on page 194)

# The Cracked Voice of Propaganda

**D**URING the last two years the M.O.I. has built up what is perhaps the largest and best organised non-theatrical distribution scheme in the world. The total audience during 1942 was twelve million, and it is expected to reach eighteen million during 1943. Over half of the 1942 audience, 6½ million people, went to shows given by mobile projection units—137 units give 1,300 shows a week. So far so good. But over the past two or three months reports have been coming in to show that although the M.O.I. scheme gives an enormous number of shows to large numbers of people, the shows themselves are not all that they might be. The following is a description of a fairly typical show to a rural audience:—

"Lights please!" shouted a voice over the babble and laughter of children's voices.

"Listen, children," said the man operating the movie projector, "for the second time I must remind you that this is a free show given by the Ministry of Information. If you can't keep quiet, you will have to leave. All right, everybody. Lights out!"

In the comparative silence which followed this announcement, the Voice of Propaganda crackled... and buzzed... and crackled... and blurred. With considerable concentration we could catch a few words in every sentence. The hall was ice cold, the chairs were hard. The projector squeaked and rattled. Finally we resigned ourselves to piecing together some kind of story out of the visuals. After all, you could hardly blame the children.

And so for two hours a rural audience in a village hall somewhere in Britain got its bi-monthly dose of propaganda: *Worker and Warrior* (Rotha Productions); *Battle of Supplies* (Strand); *The Battle for Oil* (National Film Board of Canada); *The Harvest Shall Come* (Realist for I.C.L.). The first three of these films were straight commentary, but were still extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to follow. The last was a story film told in dialect and was completely unintelligible.

The 1,300 shows are shared by factory audiences and villages. Although of course there are no children at the factory shows, the sound is often just as bad. There seem to be two main problems:

- (1) The shows are not presented as well as they could be.
- (2) The quality of the sound is so bad that it is often completely unintelligible.

## Showmanship

Number (1) is not a difficult problem to solve. Children go to the shows with their parents and, as children have always done at the "pictures", they enjoy them in their own way with a lot of shouts and screams. Of course if the sound were better the children would most likely follow the films more closely; but anyway it seems fairly easy to split the shows and have special shows for children.

Then there is the question of how the films are shown. The projectionists are extremely competent and most of them add their own little personal touches to the presentation of each show; but they are not given much help. In most cases they have to start their shows off with no preliminary build-up. Lights are turned off abruptly and on goes the first film. Quite a number of projectionists, on their own initiative, make a short speech at the beginning of each programme. This helps to quieten the audience down and get them settled and ready to see films. This also seems a fairly simple problem to solve. The Ministry could easily put out a good standard introduction and end for each new programme, with even a musical run-up of a couple of hundred feet, some good exciting newsreel shots and a distinctive title.

Lastly there is the local advertising. At the moment small posters about 15 inches by 25 are used. There is a white space shaped like a screen in which the projectionist writes the details of the show. There are no special notices for the front of the hall. If the non-theatrical shows are to be successful there must be a certain amount of showmanship to put them over and to convince people that they are not going to see a charity performance but as sensible and entertaining a film show as they might get in their local cinema.

The projectionists and organisers are good, competent and enthusiastic, but few of them have any experience of the presentation side of the entertainment business. What might solve the trouble would be for the Ministry to employ a good showman from an exhibiting company to go round and draw up a list of ideas for advertising and presenting the shows.

## Sound

The quality of the sound at the shows is a far more complicated problem. To start with there are conditions caused by the war which cannot be corrected. There is a shortage of trained projectionists. It is difficult to get replacements of projector parts. No new projectors of the best type have been received for over two years. Laboratory work is not all that it should be, due to inexperienced personnel, faulty film stock, and shortage of chemicals. But if we are going to have non-theatrical shows of sound films they must be heard. If not, there is no point in having sound and we might just as well go back to silent films with titles.

Both the Ministry of Information and the producers could have done a lot towards getting better sound. The Ministry seems to have been so pleased with the figures that they haven't bothered to do anything about the sound. The producers see a 35 mm. show copy run with ideal projection conditions in a comfortable theatre and have not bothered to enquire any further. The Ministry invited them to meet the regional organisers of the non-theatrical scheme but only two producers turned up and no results were achieved.

## Tricks to Improve

It would be fairly easy to get a first-class sound engineer and to send him out to do a thorough investigation of the original recording, the development of the original negative, the condition and quality of recording prints, the quality of re-recording, the loss through reduction printing, and finally of the projection, and to issue as soon as possible a full list of recommendations to production companies, sound recordists, laboratories and projectionists. There are so many simple little tricks that can improve 16 mm. projection that are not known by the technicians involved. No re-recording of any film that is to be optically reduced, no background music or effects, as little dialogue as possible, no commentators with deep bass voices, simple damping of tiny halls. Some sound systems seem much better for optical reduction than others; for instance, Movietone system is usually very good.

## Labour Wasted

About nine million people are going to sit in village halls and factories during 1943 and see these non-theatrical shows. It is absolutely essential for something to be done quickly. The Ministry of Information has been approached with the suggestion that a sound engineer should be appointed to conduct an investigation but that was over a month ago and nothing has happened yet. Good audiences, good films, and a lot of valuable labour and materials are being wasted. It is about time that the M.O.I. realised it is more important for people to see films and to hear them than it is to have a good report at the end of the year with a lot of fancy figures,

# THEY LAUGH AT REALISM

By Roger Manvell

It is just part of the debt truth must sometimes pay to art. It is only reasonable. If you spend thousands of hours of a man's leisure time training him to expect human action to be dressed up and made all of a climax so that he shall live in a progressive state of pleasing tension, that is what will happen. They will laugh at the real thing. They will grow tense and hushed only at the artificial. That is, at the pictures.

This is a danger for the documentary directors who are now gradually, and deservedly, cutting into feature direction. Their work is a ray of cool light on a screen which has been too long flushed pink during the credits of the customary pieces of romantic artifice. But the cool light is proving a little too much for many of the cinema-goers who have not seen enough of this new idiom to distinguish it from the ingrained conventions of melodrama.

The conventions of melodrama have predisposed our twenty-five million cinema addicts to anticipate well-groomed artificial faces, dramatically timed gesture and action, the finesse of the well-paid artist. After the slick and polished winner, the real people who play unpaid parts in the newsreels look garish and awkward, like persons who bat and shy before a press photographer at some local function, or stare hollowly out of the pages of the illustrated society weeklies. Even the toughs like Spencer Tracy, Will Fyfe and Wallace Beery are well-paid and therefore disguised toughs, full of disciplined and timely vigour.

## A new idiom

The documentary directors started out the other end of the scale. The only artists were behind the camera: the only timely gesture from the real unpaid raw material of humanity in front of the lens was the gesture of their particular craft or skill. The pits and hollows of their unsmooth faces, accentuated by lighting and camera angle, were a new pictorial idiom, a new translation of what was too familiar in daily experience to seem right on a screen so long devoted to the strange glamour of the stars. And so these faces from the street and factory, enlarged in close-up, smiling, self-conscious, real, were a shock to the people themselves, and caused the same laughter as the curate gets when he appears in a farce at some parish theatricals.

People who see themselves in a documentary nearly always laugh their heads off. The film has to be shown again and again before the sight of themselves enlarged on a screen, performing some familiar action, becomes an object of critical interest. This laughter is partly inborn shyness mixed with vanity. They never knew they looked like that. Doesn't Mrs. Brown act funny. Look at him going on so. There's old George. It is rather terrifying to see yourself where you are used to seeing Ginger Rogers. At the same time simple personal vanity is tickled and the laughter is combined with happy shyness. The cinema records an act of permanence: it is amusing to feel that you will do it again every time the film is projected: it is a peepshow immortality. But above all the laughter is due to the sense of artificiality which

the screen brings to the familiar; the body in which you live and move sits watching the same body busy and moving independently. And it is darn funny.

Violence on the screen quite often provokes laughter. Pleasure-excitement in real life is usually a laughing-matter; that is just human. While the ghosts quiver on the dark lit screen many people who are enjoying themselves laugh with excitement. So do children during a chase. Laughter is part of the relief from the suppressed energy called tension. But what is more interesting and more curious is the laughter produced by shock.

## Taboo words

The language used by the men on the raft whilst the *Jerries of In Which We Serve* shoot them up is mild compared with what a voluble man would use in the actual circumstances. Yet an unsophisticated audience knowing full well the peril and stress of the situation will laugh at words like "bastard" and "bloody". Why? Because they come from an artificial medium, a screen, a speaker, and they are magnified, are heard in a packed hall. Such words heard by anyone with two ears alert, in any place where people congregate, are none the less secret words, taboo words for half-private use only. They are like taking your uglier underclothes off in front of a comparatively well-dressed assembly. Result, laughter due to mild shock. Severer shock, such as the actual experience itself, would lead either to hysteria or greater self-control according to temperament.

Psychologists, social workers, artists unfettered by minor conventions, and documentary directors do not laugh at swearing. But the public does; swearing is a continuous mild joke, like sex is a strong one. It is irritating to hear the laughter, but it is ten to one that the average provincial British audience will produce it.

An excellent recent documentary of Army experience is *Kill or be Killed*. The evident intention of this film is to be realistic within the frame-work of an unensorable treatment. The language is strong, but less strong than the situation would actually warrant; the subject is as grim as anything in war can be: two soldiers, one British, one German, man-hunt each other. Barring details produced by captious criticism, there is nothing in the film which could not happen. And yet when the British sergeant, having but barely escaped with his life from the marksmanship of the German sniper, says "I'll get that Jerry bastard before he gets me" (a perfectly reasonable remark) the audience shouts with laughter, or gives a mild titter if it is drawn from the more county set-up. Thirty seconds is then required to restore the atmosphere intended by the situation as a whole.

In the fine Soviet documentary-newsreel *One Day of War* there is a most moving shot towards the end of an old Russian woman beating a German prisoner after the reoccupation of her village by the Russians. The significance of this unposed shot entirely escaped the audience, which laughed at the crude, unco-ordinated movements of the woman's pent-up indignation.

Reconstructed, acted, carefully shot, edited, that is dressed up in screen terms, this simple incident of personal retribution could have reduced this same audience to any emotional state required by the conscious intentions of the director.

The bayoneting at the end of *Nine Men*, violently and primitively reconstructed with the steel thrust down beside instead of into the bodies of the Italian soldiers will probably cause this same laughter in the provincial and suburban houses. It is a pity. More dramatically, more horrifically or more artificially shot there would be no laughs. But Harry Watt is a documentary director, brought up to use actuality in the documentary tradition of truth first and drama second. But the simple violence of the bayoneting is the climax of a very good film, with documentary turned feature. It is to be hoped audiences will take it in the strong stride of the film, forgetting their normal reaction to violence presented without the trickeries of atmospheric melodrama.

It is of great importance at this stage of the development of commercial cinema that the more intelligent producers and directors watch these quirks of audience psychology. It is important that *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Citizen Kane* should not have their serious theme and beauty of treatment marred by the titters of ill-informed audiences. The war has brought a period of maturity to the commercial screen. The financial bosses have let up and allowed thought and actuality to fill the bill on occasion, especially in this country. Exhibitors go on clamouring for the escape-from-the-war pictures, full of the glamour-beauty which has paid so well in the past, and will always pay whilst there is nothing else to see. Audiences, shocked into seriousness by the Nazi threat to their strength and civil liberties, by their broken homes and severed affections, are no longer sure that glamour-beauty supplies their need. They require to share the emotions of the war itself, and to a generation not fully literate in good writing, the screen alone can provide serious participation in the dominant emotion of this changing world. This explains the success of those films which have combined a good story with actualistic treatment—*The Foreman went to France*, 49th Parallel, *One of our Aircraft is Missing*, *Next of Kin* and *Nine Men*.

## Power of realism

This new school of realism requires the assistance of the documentary directors who know the people who are fighting the war. It requires their sympathetic understanding in the direction of that people when they are needed in front of the camera. But these directors must watch what is for them a new audience-psychology, the psychology of the direction of the feature film. Truth must be presented, but in such a way that its inescapable emotional appeal is felt through the peculiar channels of screen idiom along which the public has learnt to receive its emotional impulses. They must not laugh at realism; they must feel its power and understand its implications.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 3 NUMBER 11-12

NOV.-DEC. 1942

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is produced under the auspices of Film Centre, London, in association with American Film Center, New York.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

FILM CENTRE LTD.  
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON

W.1 GERRARD 4253

## TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH

### 'The Magnificent Ambersons': 'Desert Victory'

#### The Magnificent Ambersons

A Mercury Production. Script and Direction: Orson Welles.

(from a novel by Booth Tarkington).

ORSON WELLES is frightened of nothing—except his subject matter. He undertakes every possible risk in shooting and in direction; proves himself right by breaking all the rules; shows an almost childish disrespect for his audiences' eyes, and at the same time compliments them by assuming that they have adult and quick-moving minds; but in this film, as in *Citizen Kane*, the skeleton still rattles in the cupboard, and the unspeakable fear is spoken—"Let not my characters be true."

Welles should worry. He's got a long way to go before he learns to bring people alive. His people, and what happens to them, are part of a very stimulating exercise in which he persuades us to take part. They go through their motions, and their emotions, in fine style. They excite our interest, our admiration and a part of our critical faculties. But they cannot move us, because Welles has put them there as a barrier between himself and reality—and also perhaps, as a barrier between himself and the general citizenry.

*The Magnificent Ambersons* is about a fantastically wealthy and wildly perverted family in a small American town at the beginning of the century—the story of an aristocracy whose corruption comes from money and not from in-breeding. The family destroys itself, as it is fated to do, and all its material possessions (collected, displayed, polished, arranged, presented, and carefully catalogued by Welles in scene after scene) crumble away and vanish. There is nothing left except a horrid young man who has killed his mother out of jealousy and a horrid young lady who is much, much too fond of her father.

#### The Old Myth.

The Ambersons' story is really the old myth which runs through Greek tragedy and has been pushed around not unsuccessfully by O'Neill in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. It is a story which must either be told in the grand manner of great tragedy, with all the Aristotelian canons duly observed; or as a psychological study of great and unpleasant intimacy. Welles gets nearer to the latter than the former—but in general all he gives us is a puppet show, put on regardless of expense, with the figures stuffed with the very finest sawdust.

The extraordinary thing is that it is so well done that the film commands your closest attention all the time. In order presumably to avoid any formalisation which might verge on the tragic, he plays each scene with a casualness of dialogue which could only result from a miraculous technique, endless and painstaking rehearsal, and a wonderful sense of timing. Over and over again he plays scenes in the most unexpected

way with insolent ease. The kitchen scene—about 800 feet of single set-up and dialogue, with movements across the picture and into the background by three different people, with a lavish loading of inanimate detail which recalls Feyder's *Thérèse Raquin*—is persuasive and engrossing. The old man thinking about death with a flicker of firelight on his face. The "horseless-carriage" party in the early twentieth century snow—an animation of everybody's old snapshot albums. Aunt Fanny's scene of super hysterics, played with an almost embarrassing accuracy. The long and elaborate truck shots along streets and sidewalks. The unexpected camera angles and camera movements. All these things are remarkable, and are completely unlike any work being done by any other film director to-day.

There is little doubt as to the great influence Orson Welles will have on the technique of movie. He is elaborating new and revolutionary methods in continuity, in camera fluidity, and in the use of dialogue. But his own stature will never increase until he has the courage to face up to real people, and to put them, in the round, on the screen. Till then his appeal will be limited to film society and specialised audiences—not because he is "above the heads" of ordinary folk, but because ordinary folk have enough good sense not to bother themselves about matters which are purely cerebral and have in them nothing creative, nothing of the real warmth of humanity.

#### Desert Victory

Army and R.A.F. Film Units. M.O.I.

This is a splendid job. It doesn't try to do more than it sets out to do. It eschews tricks and frills. It rests solidly on the material shot—and very finely shot indeed—by all the many anonymous technicians attached to the forces in Libya. The only additions which have been made are a number of simple animated diagrams, which explain the tactical aspects very clearly; and a staged sequence depicting the Eighth Army's night attack at El Alamein. The cutting is first class, throughout.

The mood of the film is one of sober enthusiasm which fits the moment and which is very well backed by J. L. Hodson's commentary. There is no gloating (not even over the newsreel shots of Rommel at his most pompous), and no over-playing of events whose greatness lies in their achievement, which has been duly and accurately recorded for us by the movie camera and which can only be sullied by exaggeration and over-emphasis. In fact all the newsreel boys ought to be made to see *Desert Victory* through over and over again. They might learn quite a lot that way.

The film is, of course, a sure-fire winner in this country. No doubt it will be even more effective in Russia, the U.S.A., and the other Allied countries. And it has, one hopes, finally proved to the authorities that it is sensible to give front line priorities to the film people.



# The First Documentalist

by Sgt. James Dugan

OF THE U.S. EIGHTH AIR FORCE NEWSREEL UNIT

AMONG the things I forgot to pack when I came overseas were my notes on Francis Doublier, so the following sketch will be irritatingly vague and possibly inaccurate as to exact dates and circumstances. However, the redoubtable pioneer who is my subject will undoubtedly survive the war. I shouldn't be surprised if he one day goes back to his native Lyons, where the programme of his homecoming banquet will furnish more accurate data than this.

His old employers, the Lumière brothers, will not be there. One is dead and the other is conspicuous on the rolls of quinslings compiled by Fighting France.

In the eighties and nineties Lumière Frères of Lyons were the best known manufacturers of photographic supplies. They had a large factory, a sound name, and a consuming itch to sell their supplies in other countries. In 1892 their excellent laboratories began work on an advertising device of such ingenuity that Auguste and Louis Lumière foresaw the film market of the world falling into their lap. This was the first practicable motion picture camera.

Frieze-Green in England, the Edison inventors in America, and many others, were working along parallel lines on gadgets with which to turn the enigma of persistence of vision into the first fumbling cinema. Whatever motives the others entertained the Lumières perfected their remarkable camera for the sole purpose of boosting sales of film and photographic supplies.

Francis Doublier, a bright, black-eyed country boy of 16, was an apprentice in the Lyons factory, when he was designated as one of the agents assigned to take to the field with the new device in 1894. The camera itself was small and versatile. It weighed about 8 lbs. and was about the size of a G.P.O. telephone coin box. It loaded 50 feet of 35 mm. film at a shutter speed of 24 frames a second. It was, and is, a well-made machine. I have seen excellent pictures Francis Doublier made with it in 1941.

In addition to being a camera, it was also a projector when augmented by carbon arc lamps. Doublier's travelling kit was portable. He depended on a mail schedule of raw stock and chemicals at various points in his travels, and, of course, processed his own film, wherever he happened to be. The skilful Doublier developed and printed his stuff in baths, bidets, basins, or whatever the hotel accommodation offered.

The camera itself was not for sale; in fact the Lumières took the piquant attitude that the device was a deep trade secret, which they would have been horrified to consider manufacturing for sale. Doublier and his fellow agents were sworn to guard it like a glamorous bombight. They slept with it.

Doublier's method of selling the photographic supplies of the Lyons factory was to go to a key town and set himself up in the market place at high noon with as much commotion as possible. He would then expose fifty or a hundred feet of film on the crowded street, taking care to catch as many people as possible and to apprise each and every one of them that they had been filmed. Posters would then surreptitiously appear, advertising a showing that night in any available hall or storeroom. As he grew practised at the

game, the programme was no doubt padded out with topical subjects such as the market place of the previous city on his travel.

The cameraman-promoter had gorgeous fun on his trips and his selling of the name of Lumière was notable enough to keep him travelling for the better part of three years. The films he made, not only of the market place, but the parade, the local shrine and monument, the scenic beauty of a city, dribbled back to Lyons. He sent them to more to get rid of them with as any view of reporting on his travels, much less as a conscious documentalist.

He travelled through France and Germany (a steamer on the Rhine), Spain (a bullfight), Italy (a holy day), and as far East as Samara, now known as Kuibishev, in Russia. He filmed the coronation of Tsar Alexander II in St. Petersburg in 1896, and secured shots of the disaster a few days afterward on the plain outside Petrograd, at, I think, Tsarskoye Selo, where thousands of people were killed in a mad rush to see the new Tsar and Tsarina, and to get one of the coronation souvenirs—a ceramic cup and a silk scarf bearing the likenesses of the Royal pair.

Doublier filmed from a platform over the crowd. The pressure of the crowd crushed his platform and he made his way for a hundred feet walking on the heads of dead and dying people. He was seized as he left the scene by the police, who peremptorily destroyed his film. He barely saved his camera.

In 1895 there took place in Paris what was undoubtedly the first theatrical showing of motion pictures. So much acrimony has grown up over who actually showed the first "movies", to a paying audience, that I must apologise specifically for not having the date at hand. However, Edison's première at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York in 1896, which is officially recognised by the Hays Office and Macy's Department Store, as the natal date, came months after the Paris exhibition. From Lumière's to that first cinema audience, which included Maxim Gorki, came the first documentaries. Gorki was profoundly disturbed by the experience. He saw a woman of the Lumière household in a handsome striped silk dress, playing with her baby. He saw the famous "Workmen Razing a Wall", the first proletarian subject, and he saw another sequence of the Lumière employees leaving the factory. The shirt-waisted girls are stepping smartly out of the gate. "Look sharp, now," says Doublier, when he shows it to you, "Here I come." The young Francis comes out on a bicycle, scattering the girls and looking very jaunty in a straw boater.

Further Doublier sales tours took him to the Orient, to Madagascar, and back through North Africa. Early in the twentieth century he was sent to America to found a New England factory for Lumière Frères. The pressure of Eastman and to some extent, Edison, aborted the plan. Doublier became a producer. The movies had advanced in ten years from an advertising device to a theatrical-industrial undertaking. Doublier designed and built the first studios at Fort Lee, New Jersey, which were an advance over Edison's Black Maria, the box on the turn-table that followed the sun. Doublier's studios were designed

for artificially lighted sets, which George Méliès had been using.

Doublier produced comedies and serials and became quite rich and Americanised. He lived in an enormous frame house in Fort Lee with a staggering wine cellar, a charming wife and a growing family of boys, one of whom grew up to become a saxophone player. He allowed himself the gesture of retiring at 45.

In 1929 Doublier ceased being rich. He was able to keep the house; that was all. He went back to work at the age of 51 as a laboratory worker—where he had started at 16. He is a very good colour processor and still is at the age of 65.

Doublier has kept up the liveliest interest in films. His own precious French material he has augmented through swapping with other old timers for Edison, Méliès, and early English and American film.

One of the awesome bits in his archives is a few feet of the first sound film, patented in England in 1905 by Eugene Lauste, a French inventor. Lauste held the basic patent for sound-on-film by the variable density sound track, which, despite the absence of electrical amplification, he successfully demonstrated in 1907-9.

Doublier's historical collection is embodied in a fascinating film he has been making and re-making for twenty years. To my knowledge the only people who have seen Doublier's astonishing film are a few friends of Merritt Crawford, and the Boy Scouts and Chamber of Commerce of Fort Lee, New Jersey. Doublier has a high local reputation as an entertainer at neighbourhood festivities with his picture. He titles, dubs, processes, edits, and exhibits his own picture, and he is never satisfied with it. After a screening for an old crony like Merritt Crawford, a neglected American film historian, in which the two friends will dispute hotly over the remains of the wine cellar, Doublier is likely to spend his evenings for the next two weeks, re-editing the film.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SUMMER ISSUE

#### FILMS IN SWEDEN A PLEA FOR D. W. GRIFFITH CHILDREN'S CINEMA

EIRE

6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Subject for Discussion.** Seven League Productions. *Direction:* Hans Nieter. *Camera:* W. Saschitzky. *Associa.e Producer:* Basil Wright. M.O.I. 15 mins.

**Subject:** Venereal disease.

**Treatment:** A child loses its sight because his parents are unknowing syphilitics. The doctor attending the case goes to an A.R.P. post and is told that he is to lead the next discussion group at the post. When asked what subject he would choose he suggests that they should discuss venereal disease. The post wanders, representing, probably accurately, the feelings of most middle-aged men, says that as they have men and women at their meetings the subject is unsuitable, unsavoury and unnecessary. A girl comes in and says that such an attitude is ridiculous and appeals to the other people for support. The doctor tells them about the child and also certain important points about V.D. and its treatment. His talk is reasonable and eminently sensible and the film ends with the post wanders pinning up a notice saying that next week's "Subject for Discussion" will be Venereal Disease.

Faced with a subject about which everybody has probably some sort of mental inhibition, the producers have turned out a first-class job. The film avoids the sensational and the coy and is sane, sensible and interesting. The important medical points, symptoms, treatment and consequences are made clearly and could give offence only to the most prurient minded. It also carefully avoids the ethical question, so stupidly

plugged in the Government press advertisements. An excellent job.

**Propaganda Value:** The fact that audiences are going to be shown that, when necessary, syphilis and gonorrhoea can be discussed between people as casually as meningitis or small pox, is the main propaganda value of the film. But its more concrete statements should also have an excellent effect by placing venereal disease among the ailments which one automatically goes to the doctor about.

**China.** Paul Rotha Productions. *Production:* Donald Alexander. *Compiled by* Budge Cooper. M.O.I. 15 mins.

**Subject:** The rebirth of China.

**Treatment:** For the most part this film covers familiar ground, but it does it in such a way that one might be seeing it all for the first time. It tells of China relying on her past and torn by internal struggles. It shows Japan apeing the West, building up her industries and her war machine and finally seizing Manchuria in order to get vital raw materials. Then, alarmed at the signs of national unity growing up in China, she struck with her highly trained, highly mechanised army at what she thought would be an easy victim. The rest of the story we know. The material to illustrate the theme is extremely well chosen and the commentary is sensibly incisive. The film was only marred by an occasional indecisiveness in the effects track which sometimes

followed the visuals closely but gave up every now and then for no good reason.

**Propaganda value:** Excellent. One of the best straight informational films we have seen.

**Operational Heights.** R.A.F. Film Unit, M.O.I. 32 mins.

**Subject:** Barrage balloons guard vital stretches of the sea approaches to these islands. This is the story of the crew of one of the balloon ships and the work they do.

**Treatment:** A marriage has been arranged between the Montagus and Capulets. Documentary Romeo has made successful eyes at story-film Juliet, but what with one thing and another the consummation of the wedding looks like being a little more difficult than everybody thought. If the studios make a film about a man who mixes cocktails instead of a man who drinks when they call it documentary. If documentary gives a few gags and a bit of love interest to an engine driver they too often think that they are automatically going to enthrall an eager public. But the public on the whole likes its entertainment straight. It either wants fact or fiction and if fact is going to adopt the trappings of fiction for the better seduction of the audience it has got to learn its job all over again. People go to the movies to see stars but they stay there because of the careful, cunning, clever and hard slaving that goes into the film behind the stars. In a feature film the throw-away lines, the human touches, the ease and naturalness are the result of infinite experience and endless care. And the easier it looks on the screen the more difficult it is to do in the studio.

Thus we have *Operational Heights*. It is a nice film. It's got a good feeling about it, the men are well chosen, the job they do is pleasantly portrayed, the camerawork is superb, the editing excellent. Yet all the time the film wobbles between telling us what the job means and trying to interest us in the crew as individuals in a purely artificial way. There are little incidents scattered through the film, talk of a girl friend, the baking of a cake, those little touches which can mean so much. But to ask ordinary, pleasant men on a balloon ship to handle the necessary dialogue, to point the laughs—in fact to do anything other than their job—is surely to throw too much weight on their shoulders. This is not to suggest that ordinary people cannot handle an odd line or two in front of the camera, but the interplay of dialogue, building up incident and sequence, is a job for professionals.

Apart from this basic weakness the film is pleasant enough.

**Propaganda Value:** Good informational stuff.

**Worker and Warfront No. 5.** M.O.I. Non-T. 5 mins.

**Subject:** A magazine of various items relating to the war effort.

**Treatment:** This issue is a very great advance on all the previous ones. The subject matter has something more urgent to it and the treatment has plenty of bite as a result. The two highspots are the speed up of coal production via Joint Committees, etc., and an admirable item, edited from North African material, of an aerial sortie from a palm-fringed aerodrome.

**Propaganda value:** Good. It is to be hoped that the series will keep up to this level.

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Cinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2

# CATALOGUE OF FILMS, MADE AND ACQUIRED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, FROM JULY 1st TILL DECEMBER 31st, 1942.

Published by permission of the Ministry of Information.

## NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

"Alert in the East", "Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat" and "Welfare of the Workers", listed in the catalogue published in D.N.L., October, 1942, have been withdrawn.

Film titles in brackets are alternative titles of films listed elsewhere in the catalogue.

Names of producers and directors in brackets do not appear on credit titles.

Lengths are recorded in feet of 35 mm. gauge, or in minutes of 16 mm. gauge.

5-M: Five-minute film.

T: Mainly for theatrical release.

N.T.: Mainly for non-theatrical release.

I: Instructional, N.T.

C.F.L.: Listed in Central Film Library.

W: Withdrawn.

R: Reviewed in D.N.L.

O: Sent overseas.

OO: Mainly for overseas use.

OOO: Wholly for overseas use.

## I. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES			NOTES
					T	NT	LENGTH	
Ask C.A.B.	CFL 5-M O	Verity..	S. Box M. Munden	H. Cass	9/42	1/43	803	
Battle for Freedom, The	CFL NT O	Strand	B. Wright	—	—	9/42	1,342	Library compilation
Battle for Supplies, The	CFL OO	Strand	B. Wright	—	—	11/42	1,658	Library compilation. R. Vol. III, p. 156
C.F.M.A.	CFL NT O	Strand	A. Shaw	C. de Lattour, J. Banting & others	—	11/42	1,367	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Cine Sports Magazine No. 1	OOO	G.B.L.	—	—	—	—	939	Despatched 11/42
Cine Sports Magazine No. 2	OOO	G.B.L.	—	—	—	—	930	Despatched 12/42
Civil Defence Ambulance	CFL I O	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Searle	—	1/43	1,863	
Climping Potatoes	CFL I O	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	(Margaret Thompson)	—	11/42	693	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Coastal Command	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	J. Holmes	11/42	—	6,593	Home T. distribution by Paramount. R. Vol. III, p. 152
Common Cause	CFL NT	Verity	Max Munden	H. Cass	—	1/43	1,007	
Control Room	CFL NT O	Shell	D. de Marney	G. Bell	—	1/43	2,076	R. Vol. III, p. 156
Day That Saved the World, The	CFL NT O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	—	8/42	—	846	Library compilation
Dockers	5-M O	—	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	7/42	—	670	R. Vol. III, p. 100
Dustbin Parade	CFL 5-M O	Realist Halas	(J. Taylor)	—	10/42	2/43	493	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey (Cartoon)
Empress Stadium	OOO	Paramount	—	—	—	—	1,250	Ed. by Spectator. U.S.S.R. only. Despd. 10/42
Essential Jobs	CFL 5-M O	Paul Rotha Prods.	D. Alexander	J. Page	8/42	12/42	1,392	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Feeding Your Hens in Wartime	CFL I O	Films of G.B.	A. Buchanan	A. Buchanan	—	1/43	978	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
First Aid Post	CFL I O	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Searle	—	1/43	1,232	
Free House	5-M W	Verity	S. Box M. Munden	H. Cass	8/42	—	633	
Freedom of Aberfeldy	OO	A. Harper	—	A. Harper	—	—	925	Despatched 2/43
Garden Tools	CFL I	Realist	(F. Sainsbury)	Margaret Thompson	—	1/43	1,209	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Great Harvest, The	CFL 5-M O	Paul Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	J. Chambers	11/42	2/43	650	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
H.M.S. King George V	CFL NT O	Verity	—	(Rayd. Elton)	—	—	1,392	
House in London, A	CFL OO	Paramount	—	—	—	1/43	781	Despatched 8/42, R. Vol. III, p. 125
Indians in Action	OOO	Celloyd Despatch	—	—	—	—	861	Newseel compilation. Despatched 9/42
Killed or be Killed	CFL NT O	Realist	(J. Taylor)	Len Lye	—	1/43	1,644	
Letter from Ulster, A	T O	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	B. Hurst	2/43	—	2,910	Made with co-operation of U.S. Forces in Britain. Home T. distribution by M.G.M.
Life Begins Again	CFL NT O	Paul Rotha Prods.	(P. Rotha)	D. Alexander	—	10/42	1,799	
Lift Your Head Comrade	CFL O	Spectator	B. Wright	M. Hankinson	12/42	3/43	1,316	"Into Battle, No. 1." R. Vol. IV, p. 165
Malta Convoy	CFL OO	Movietone	—	—	—	1/43	1,180	Newseel compilation
Malta G.C.	T O	Crown & Army Film Unit	—	—	1/43	—	1,821	Compilation. Home T. distribution by Warners. Made by Sir Arnold Barr. Commentary spoken by Laurence Olivier. R. Vol. IV, p. 170
Model Procedure for Water Relaying	CFL I O	Shell	E. Anstey	Kay Mander	—	10/42	2,039	
National Fire Service Mobilising	CFL I O	Shell	E. Anstey	Kay Mander	—	10/42	2,030	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Newfoundlanders at War	OOO	Pathe	—	—	—	—	894	Despatched 8/42
New Fire Bomb, A	CFL 5-M O	Shell	E. Anstey	N. Bell	9/42	11/42	684	R. Vol. III, p. 125
Nose Has It, The	CFL 5-M O	Gainsborough	(E. Black)	V. Guest	9/42	1/43	725	R. Vol. III, p. 152
One Company	OO	Gaumont British	(E. Black)	J. Harlow	—	1/43	3,844	Recruiting film. N.F. distribution
Order of Lenin	OO	Crown	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	—	975	Despatched 1/43
Raid on France	OO	Ealing	M. Balcan	T. Dickinson	—	—	1,916	Adaptation of last 2 reels of Next of Kin. U.S.S.R. only. Despatched 12/42
Report from Britain	OOO	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	—	—	3,242	Newseel compilation. U.S.S.R. only. Despatched 9/42
Russian Lesson	OOO	Strand	A. Shaw	I. Moffat	—	—	1,162	Edited by Spectator. U.S.S.R. only. Despatched 9/42
Greetings to Soviet Schoolchild	CFL I O	Spectator	—	—	—	—	959	Newseel compilation. Despatched 11/42
Shock Troops	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	926	Newseel compilation.
Sky Giant	CFL NT O	Movietone	—	—	—	1/43	926	Newseel compilation.
Speed up on Stilings	CFL NT O	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Tharp	—	1/43	1,708	R. Vol. III, p. 151
Spring on the Farm	CFL NT O	Verity	R. Keene	R. Keene	—	1/43	1,338	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. III, p. 151
Twelve Days	CFL NT O	Mention Park	C. Musk	C. Musk	—	9/42	1,084	R. Vol. III, p. 113
United Nations, The	OOO	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	G. Gunn	—	—	954	Technicolor. Despatched 8/42, R. Vol. III, p. 113
Waves	CFL NT	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	1/43	1,051	Adapted from a British Council film of the same name. R. Vol. III, p. 152
We Sail at Midnight	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	J. Spiro	2/43	—	2,480	Home T. Distribution by Pathe. R. Vol. III, p. 151
We Speak to India	OOO	Pub. Rel.	—	R. Massingham	—	—	989	Assoc. Producer: A. Shaw. Despatched 9/42, R. Vol. III, p. 130
Women away from Home	CFL NT O	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	G. Gunn	—	9/42	943	
Worker and Warfront No. 2	CFL NT O	—	—	—	—	7/42	1,800	Items produced by various units. Edited by Paul Rotha. Productions, R. Vol. III, p. 125 (No. 2);
Worker and Warfront No. 4	CFL NT O	—	—	—	—	1/43	988	Vol. V, p. 165 (3); Vol. IV, p. 166 (4)
Young Farmers	CFL NT O	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	1/43	1,282	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey. R. Vol. III, p. 152

## 2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

(Average Length 125ft.)

TITLE OR THEME	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOV. DEPT. CONCERNED	RELEASE DATE
Diphtheria	Paul Rotha Productions	(J. Chambers)	Health	11/7/42
Child Road Safety	Spectator	(J. Elliot)	War Transport	27/7/42
Sorting Salvage	Spectator	(J. Elliot)	Supply	10/8/42
Correct Addressing	Pathe	(L. Beir)	G.P.O.	13/8/42
Diphtheria II	Paul Rotha Productions	(J. Chambers)	Health	17/8/42
Collapsible Metal Tubes	Realist	(L. Lye)	Supply	27/8/42
N.A.A.F.C.	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Health	1/9/42
Care of Clothes	Paul Rotha Productions	(S. Eisler)	Labour	14/9/42
Chicken Waste for Pigs (Cartoon)	Paul Rotha Productions	(P. Pickering)	Board of Trade	21/9/42
Be Prepared	McDougal & McKendrick	(McDougal & McKendrick)	Food	8/10/42
Railings	Spectator	(G. Gunn)	War Transport	22/10/42
Chicken Feed	Publicity Pictures	(A. Hopkins)	Works and Buildings	7/10/42
Service Women	Spectator	(B. Luff)	Supply	5/11/42
The Five Inch Bath	Publicity Pictures	(A. Hopkins)	M.O.I.	16/11/42
The Postman Always Rings at Christmas	Public Relationship	(R. Massingham)	Fuel and Power	19/11/42
The Magician	Paul Rotha Productions	(G. Shurtleigh)	G.P.O.	22/11/42
Sensible Buying	Paul Rotha Productions	(B. Cooper)	Fuel and Power	3/12/42
Water Pipes	Film Traders	(P. Hennessey)	Board of Trade	7/12/42
Eyes on the Target	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Health	10/12/42
The Way to his Heart (with The Aspidras)	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Fuel and Power	14/12/42
Cooks	Strand	(D. Taylor)	Food	17/12/42
Little Annie's Rag-Book (Puppet film)	Verry	(K. Annakin)	M.O.I.	21/12/42
Is Your Journey Really Necessary?	Paul Rotha Productions	(L. Bradshaw)	Supply	24/12/42
Hogsmorton (with Gillie Potter)	Spectator	(G. Gunn)	War Transport	30/12/42
	Strand	(D. Taylor)	Fuel and Power	31/12/42

† Non-T distribution only.

## 3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS
Feeding the Army (Silent)	770	8/42
R.A.F. Rescue Boats (Silent)	650	9/42
These are Mobile Catapults (Silent)	702	9/42
Return of the Emperor (Silent)	825	12/42
Take Cover (Silent)	2,805	12/42

## 4. ACQUIRED FILMS

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	SOURCE	PRODUCT'N UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES T NT LENGTH	NOTES
<b>ARMY FILM UNIT</b>							
(Front Line Camera)		See "Twenty-One Miles"					
Street Fighting	CFL O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	(H. Stewart)	12/42 8/42 1,205	R. Vol. III, p. 151
Tank Battle	T O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	—	1,524	Home T. distribution by Anglo-American
							R. Vol. IV, p. 166
Troopship	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	—	7/42 11/42 686	R. Vol. III, p. 100
Twenty-One Miles	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	(H. Watt)	8/42 — 720	A longer version (1,025 ft.) for distribution overseas. R. Vol. III, p. 113, under the title: "Front Line Camera"
							Compilation
Via Persia	CFL 5-M O	A.F.U.	A.F.U.	—	—	10/42 1/43 742	Produced in Britain. R. Vol. III, p. 151
CANADA							
Motor Cycle Training	5-M O	Canadian Army	C.A.F.U.	—	(J. McDougal)	10/42 2/43 693	
Battle for Oil	C.F.L.	Nat. Film Board	N.F.B.	—	—	9/42 1,663	
Strategy of Metals	C.F.L.	Nat. Film Board	N.F.B.	—	—	1/43 1,800	
<b>BRITISH COUNCIL</b>							
Fishermen of England	OOO	British Council	Spectator	(I. Scott)	I. Scott	— — 864	Re-edited for U.S.S.R. by Spectator. Despatched 9/42
Good Value	OOO	British Council	Realist	—	H. Nietert	— — 768	Re-edited for U.S.S.R. by Spectator. Despatched 9/42
<b>I.C.I.</b>							
Growing Good Potatoes	CFL	Plant Protection	Strand	D. Taylor	R. Bond	— 1/43 900	
Harvest Shall Come, The	CFL	I.C.I.	Realist	B. Wright	M. Anderson	— 8/42 3,116	
INDIA							
Chianai Kai Shek in India	5-M O	Film Advisory Board	Indian Film Unit	—	—	9/42 — 712	Original title "Our Gallant Neighbour". Recommended. R. Vol. III, p. 125
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>							
According to Plan	CFL O	Movietone	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	— 10/42 8 min.	
Children's Story	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	Strand	S. Legg	A. Shaw	— 1/43 1,300	
Empire Aid	5-M O	Movietone	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	8/42 — 395	
Face of Scotland	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	Realist	—	B. Wright	— 1/43 1,300	
Proof Positive	CFL O	Movietone	Movietone	(G. Sanger)	—	— 10/42 7 min.	
They Made the Land	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	— 1/43 1,900	
This is Our Heritage	CFL	Gire G.	Tannar British	R. Calvert	—	— 1/43 17 min.	
Wealth of a Nation	CFL	Films of Scot. Committee	Scottish Films	S. Legg	D. Alexander	— 1/43 1,370	
<b>POLAND</b>							
Poland's New Front	CFL	Polish Govern.	Polish F.U.	—	—	10/42 642	Compilation by E. Cekalski
R.A.F.	CFL	Air Ministry	Nettlefolds	(E. Roy)	(H. Hughes)	— 5/43 1,424	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins
In the Drink	CFL	R.A.F.F.U.	R.A.F. F.U.	—	—	2,857	Home T. distribution by Butchers
Operational Height	T						
U.S.A.							
America Moves her Japs	5-M O W	U.S. Government	Office of War Information	—	—	10/42 — 797	American title: "Japanese Relocation." With Milton S. Eisenhower
Henry Browne Farmer	CFL	U.S. Govern'mt.	Dept. of Agric.	—	R. Barlow	— 1/43 1,000	
Home on the Range	CFL	U.S. Govern'mt.	Dept. of Agric.	—	T. Hogan	— 1/43 1,000	
On the Farm	CFL	Harmon Found.	Har. Foundn.	—	—	1/43 20 min.	Silent



## 5. ANALYSIS OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE M.O.I.

FOOTAGE OF FILMS						NUMBER OF FILMS					
	Sept. 3- Dec. 31 1939	1940	1941	Jan. 1- June 30 1942	TOTAL		Sept. 3- Dec. 31, 1939	1940	1941	1942	TOTAL
5-Minute	—	13,791	25,113	20,141	59,045	5-Minute	—	20	37	29	86
15-Minute	—	—	—	1,316	1,316	15-Minute	—	—	—	1	1
General Theatrical Distribution	3,130	13,543	9,228	22,506	48,407	General Theatrical Distribution	2	12	5	7	26
General N.T. Distribution	—	23,545	7,890	41,457	72,892	General N.T. Distribution	—	23	7	35	65
Instructional and Training	—	4,109	10,280	30,522	44,911	Instructional and Training	—	6	12	24	42
Mainly Overseas	—	—	—	16,383	16,383	Mainly Overseas	—	—	—	12	12
Wholly Overseas	—	3,100	11,093	22,944	37,137	Wholly Overseas	—	3	10	18	31
Trailers	—	1,600*	3,000*	4,250	8,850	Trailers	—	8	15	34	57
TOTAL	3,130	59,688	66,604	159,519	288,941	Total	2	72	86	160	320
Colonial Film Unit } 35 mm. Productions } 16 mm.	—	11,919	7,836	11,287	31,042 } 944 }	Colonial Film Unit Productions	—	8	10	16*	34
Acquired 5-Minute Films	—	1,135	6,657	11,353	19,145	Acquired 5-Minute Films	—	2	10	17	29

\* Average length = 200 feet.

† Average length = 125 feet.

\* Includes four 16 mm. productions.

\* Average length = 200 feet.

† Average length = 125 feet.

\* Includes four 16 mm. productions.

## 6. ANALYSIS OF FILMS ACQUIRED BY THE M.O.I.

SOURCE	1940*			1941			1942				TOTALS FOR 1940, 1941 and 1942				COMB. TOTAL
	C.F.L.	S-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	S-M	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	S-M	T.	O.O.O.	C.F.L.	S-M	T.	O.O.O.	
Africa	2	—	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	4	1	—	1	6
A.F.U.	—	—	—	2	3	—	3	6	—	—	5	9	—	—	14
Australia and New Zealand	—	—	—	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	3	2	—	—	5
B.C.C.A.	6	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	7	7	—	—	14
British Council	1	—	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	2	5	—	—	3	8
Cadbury	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	3
Canada	4	—	1	—	—	—	5	2†	—	—	11	2	—	2	15
Can. Council for Health Education	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2
I.C.I.	—	—	—	1	1	—	3	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	4
India	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	2	—	1	6	3	—	1	10
London Fire Brigade	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	6
Miscellaneous	4	—	1	14	1	2	12	1	—	—	30	2	—	3	35
National Savings	—	2	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	6	—	—	6
Poland	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	1	—	—	4	1	—	—	5
R.A.F.	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	2
Shell	2	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	4
U.S.A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	1	—	—	15	1	—	—	16
(March of Time)	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	7
U.S.S.R.	—	—	—	5	1	—	4	1	—	—	9	2	—	—	11
TOTAL	22	2	3	47	10	4	57	17	1	3	126	29	1	10	166

\* No films were acquired in 1939.

† Produced in Britain by Canadian Army Film Unit.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH (Cont.)

obtained free of charge and many are available in the 16 mm. size. The total number of films listed is 117.

## Trailers

AS SOON as stock rationing began to be discussed, it occurred to many people that one obvious and easy way of saving celluloid would be to abolish the screen trailer, that advertising snippet which extols in hysterical language and feverish pictures the merits of next week's film. There was one body, however, which although perhaps finding the method obvious, found it far from easy. National Screen Service makes trailers for all 28 film producing companies operating in this country and distributes between 5,500 and 6,000 trailers each week to nearly 4,000 cinemas. National Screen Service appears to feel considerable anxiety in the matter of stock saving and communicated the foregoing statistics to Mr. Paul Trench, film critic of the *Evening Standard*, together with much other information apparently designed to prove that trailer making was an important national industry with which we would dispense at our peril. After pointing out that it has been suggested that a single slide could be substituted for the trailer, Mr. Trench says: "The issue, however, is not quite so simple as that. National Screen Service, the firm which makes feature film trailers, is also producing and distributing Government-sponsored trailers. It is employed by the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Food, National Savings Committee, Red Cross, and so on. If National Screen Service ceased to issue trailers, the Government would lose a valued source of propaganda. That is one argument for retaining trailers."

The reason why the production of feature film trailers must remain inseparable from such Government work as is undertaken by National Screen Service is not made clear, but we are left to assume that the reason is a good one and Mr. Trench continues:—"The Managing Director of National Screen Service is Mr. Paul Kimberley. Mr. Kimberley is also Director of Army Cinematography which means that he is in charge of production of all Army training films. Mr. Kimberley may find himself forced to use less celluloid for Service films, although his private film business may not be affected."

Further light is thrown on the situation by the following extract from the *Kinematograph Weekly's* report of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association's recent General Council meeting:

F. A. Prior drew attention to the proposed cutting out of advertisement films. He realised that in war time all went by the board, but he was concerned at dismissing without consideration the suggestion that trailers should be discontinued altogether. It was an easy thing to say that they could be done without, but it should not be forgotten that if this were done someone would have to go right out of business. As an important art industry the trade should make a large sacrifice as a contribution to keep in business those who had the Trade's support before the war.

The General Secretary pointed out that economies in the direction of advertisement films and trailers would be far too insignificant to take into account and there was no intention of cutting these out.

## New Documentary Films cont.

**These Are the Men.** *Into Battle No. 4.* Strand. Production: Donald Taylor. Devised and compiled by Alan Osbiston and Dylan Thomas. Commentators: J. McKechnie and Brian Herbert. M.O.I. 12 mins.

**Subject:** *These Are the Men* takes an abbreviated version of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and superimposes upon the Nürnberg speeches of the Nazi leaders a set of orations in English in which Hitler, Goebbels, Göring, Streicher and Hess report their sins and mistakes as frankly as if they were victims of one of those notorious "confession drugs".

**Treatment:** The commentary and speeches are in verse by Dylan Thomas (published in the last issue of *D.N.L.*) The film opens with scenes of ordinary decent men going about their day-to-day work. These are "the makers, the workers, the bakers". In a superimposition sequence we see these peaceful men plunged into the horrors of war. A voice cries out to know who was responsible for this crime.

The scene changes to the long Nürnberg vista of brown-shirts and banners. Three tiny figures approach the rostrum. The shot is held so that the suspense becomes almost intolerable. Then they move up to the microphones and Hitler begins the speeches. "We are the men," he shouts.

He describes his early frustrated life, his hatred of Jews and socialists, his belief in the power of blood. The other leaders follow, each to profess his sadistic faith. The speeches are punctuated by the regimented cries of the crowd and rhythmical screams of "Sieg Heil!" The mass shouting and the picture is untouched and remains exactly as it was in the original film; only the superimposed English voices have been brought up to date and now carry the fully matured horror of the pre-war Nazi festival. Now we know for certain where it was all leading.

At the end of the film, the narrator says that many of the eager young Germans whom we see worshipping their Führer may in time be purged and cured and become capable of serving mankind. But their leaders, the narrator shouts, "Can never, never be forgiven."

Alan Osbiston's editing is brilliant. He has used suspense in a masterly way and has brought in the animal Nazi war cries at just those moments when they will give a sharp point of horror, irony, even of bitter comedy to the whole fantastic pageant. Dylan Thomas's verse frequently cuts like a knife into the pompously bestial affectations of this race of supermen. The verse which accompanies the ordinary peaceful citizens of the world is, however, less effective, perhaps because the poet has too often found himself obliged to fall back upon an over-conventional democratic line. His democrats are over-passive in spirit to the point of becoming puny in moral stature.

**Propaganda value:** Excellent. Less sophisticated audiences will, however, need to have their wits about them. They have to cope simultaneously with sensational pictures, English voices speaking verse, and faint German voices emanating from speakers whose neuroticisms frequently distract all attention from the sound. Yet audiences will make the effort and find it repaid. In its insistence on the essential anti-semitic and anti-socialist character of German leadership, the film strikes a blow for clear thinking about the true nature of

(continued on page 196)



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



## THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR  
ALEXANDER SHAW - DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

## These Are the Men (cont.)

the war—and strikes a blow, therefore, for clear thinking about what must be the nature of our war aims, if the sacrifice of blood is to be worth while. The high level of intense feeling is maintained until almost the very end, but the last few feet fall a little flat. The shouting voice affirming that the Nazi leaders can never be forgiven (shouting with a suspicion of hysteria rather than with confident determination) fails to strike the right finishing note. Most ordinary people have no intention of forgiving Hitler, Goebbels, Göring, Streicher or Hess, and they will be somewhat bewildered to find the Government regarding it as a matter worth announcing so excitedly.

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR,

Dear Sir,

I see in the Documentary News Letter of November/December, 1942, there is an article entitled "U.S. Dollar Winning Battle to Control British Film Industry", in which it is mentioned that Ealing Studios are "already hitched to the Americans".

I am asked to tell you that your contributor is completely misinformed in this particular; this Company is absolutely independent and has never used any funds for production other than their own resources. In this instance, and perhaps in this rare instance, it may be said that the Americans concerned have been our servants and not we theirs. The United Artists franchise agreement is such that United Artists is employed by the producers for the purpose of international distribution and United Artists never, under any circumstances, participate in production finance. In any case our arrangements with them are ending and we are reverting to the use of a Company which we own and control, for the distribution of our films.

As we take a pride in our independent position at Ealing, I would be thankful if you would publish this correction.

Yours faithfully,

CAVALCANTI

P.S.—Whilst on the subject of accuracy, may I make another point on behalf of Michael Balcon? You have named him as the producer of a food short made in these studios. Mr. Balcon did not produce this film, but loaned Studio space here for it to be produced, after protesting in vain that it should not be made.

## A REPLY

We are glad to hear from Cavalcanti that Ealing Studios are not tied to the American financiers. For some years past, as they must admit, all their films have been released through United Artists, a wholly American company. Knowing the control that distributors normally exercise over producers, it was only fair to assume, at the date of writing, that the films being made at Ealing Studios were at the dictation of United Artists. However, we are happy to learn that Ealing Studios in common with the only other independent producers in this country, have once more returned to their own distribution agency.

EDITORIAL BOARD

No. 11

## THE ASS AND THE LAP-DOG

R F U

There was an Ass and a Lap-dog that belonged to the same master. The Ass was tied up in the stable, and had plenty of corn and hay to eat, and was as well off as an Ass could be. The little dog was always sporting and gambolling about, caressing and fawning upon his master in a thousand amusing ways, so that he became a great favourite, and was permitted to lie in his master's lap. The Ass, indeed, had enough to do; he was drawing wood all day, and had to take his turn at the mill at night. But while he grieved over his own lot, it galled him more to see the Lap-dog living in such ease and luxury; so thinking that if he acted a like part to his master, he should fare the same, he broke one day from his halter, and rushing into the hall began to kick and prance about in the strangest fashion; then swishing his tail and mimicking the frolics of the favourite, he upset the table where his master was at dinner, breaking it in two and smashing all the crockery; nor would he leave off till he jumped upon his master, and pawed him with his rough-shod feet. The servants, seeing their master in no little danger, thought it was now high time to interfere, and having released him from the Ass's caresses, they so belaboured the silly creature with sticks and staves, that he never got up again; and breathed his last.

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

NO. 4, 1943

## CONTENTS

FILMS FOR RE-OCCUPIED EUROPE	198
NOTES OF THE MONTH	199
FILM OF THE MONTH	200
BRITISH FILMS IN NEW YORK	201
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	202
DOCUMENTARY DEVELOPMENTS IN AMERICA	203
STORY OF A RUSSIAN MOVIE MAN	204, 205
SCIENTIFIC FILMS	206
A LETTER TO DOCUMENTARY	207
STOCK, RATIONING AND FILM TRAILERS	208

VOL 4 NO. 4

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## AS OTHERS SEE US

"WHAT sort of people do they think we are," Mr. Churchill once asked. He was talking about our enemies but it is a question we might well ask ourselves about our friends. We know what sort of people we are but if people in other countries have different ideas we have only ourselves to blame. And if, as is even more probable, they haven't the faintest idea what we are like, so much the worse for us in the long run.

For many years now the British Council has been one of the chief organisations entrusted with the job of selling Britain abroad. To further this end they have a department which supervises the making of films to draw attention to British ideals and achievements as well as to British products. Their films are shown all over the Empire and also in neutral countries. Direct war propaganda is not their job but propaganda for the indestructible qualities of Britain is presumably their aim. This means that they must evoke interest in the British way of life and present a background picture which will arouse a sympathetic and fellow-feeling for us in foreign minds.

Now this is an important job because it builds for the future. After a war, good feelings between nations are seldom very evident and yet there is never a time when good feelings are more needed. Therefore any work which helps create international understanding is of vital importance.

Recently the British Council showed a programme of films. Since they showed them to the Press one supposes that these films were their latest and best. This programme was part of their picture of Britain and a picture presumably intended to make people abroad have good instead of bad thoughts about us. There were five films and their titles were *The Royal Mile*, *St. Pauls*, *London 1942*, *Little Ships*, *Power on the Land*. Now let us look at this picture of us and our country which is being built up with great care and expense to show to our potential friends in the Argentine, Sweden, Spain and other countries.

*The Royal Mile* is a film about Edinburgh, or rather about that part of it which lies between Holyrood Palace and Edinburgh Castle. This film tells nobody anything except that there are quite a lot of Allied soldiers in that city. There are to be sure, many references to Mary, Queen of Scots, but the historical side of the film is so garbled that it is practically impossible to know or care what it is all about. Part of the commentary is spoken as if by a guide, and anybody who has memories of visiting any monument with one of these masters of monotonous patter will know exactly how packed with irrelevancies the whole film is.

The next film brings us to London, to another monument, and really the journey wasn't necessary. For we arrive at St. Paul's

and although this is admittedly a noble edifice, it is difficult to see just what emotion it is intended to evoke in the foreign mind. Once again we are treated to some potted history, are shown a few tombs and have a quick look round the interior. Then comes the great fire raid and we see St. Paul's amidst the flaming city. The film whisks us to Fleet Street on the morning after the raid to see the papers pouring out of the presses and we are told, complacently, that a sigh of relief ran round the world when the people read the news that St. Paul's was saved. We are sure that everyone was very glad that St. Paul's was not destroyed but the world had other things to think about at that time.

*London 1942*, the next film, came nearest to presenting any sort of picture that we should ever want to look at. It has already been reviewed in this paper and although it didn't say anything very much, it did show a picture of which one could say that this is what London looked like in 1942.

*Little Ships* started off with a lot of nonsense about the sun rising and looking at the same scene that it had for the last three hundred years.

It was all about those old craftsmen who build wooden boats. Admittedly the film ended with the rescue of a British airman by one of the launches they build? but there was a strong feeling of nostalgia for the Armada all the way through.

*Power on the Land* was a surprise ending to a regrettably uninspiring programme. It consisted of a series of Technicolor shots of modern agricultural machines and it did succeed in suggesting some of the progress which is taking place in British agriculture.

Although they were all completely shot, only one of the films can be said to have been made with any feeling that people were going to sit and look and listen. They lacked all sense of persuasion and had the same impact as if bundles of picture postcards had been flung at our heads. Their total message seemed to be that we have some historic buildings, that things look pretty much as they have done for several hundred years and that everybody ought to be jolly well interested because this is Britain. And yet one could make films which would show the very real importance of St. Paul's as a symbol, the emotional significance of Edinburgh and the importance of a tradition of craftsmanship to any country which makes anything at all. In fact one could make films about Britain.

Thoughts of St. Peter's, Rome, do not make us feel any better about Italy to-day neither does the fact that the Germans are brilliant makers of children's toys cause us to shed a sympathetic tear. People are a country's real ambassadors, people and ideas. We submit this thought to the British Council, whose films the other day showed neither.



# FILMS FOR RE-OCCUPIED EUROPE

WHEN the day comes for the victorious Allies to march into

Europe they will uncover as they go many new problems of propaganda and civic instruction. It has long been obvious that the film will have a special and a vital part to play in bringing back political sanity and economic stability to the freed lands. It can help in the problem of physical reconstruction, the task of feeding, clothing and rehousing millions of people; but even more important, if men are to go forward with hope in their hearts, is the need to show that a new spirit has come to Europe. The contribution of the film, therefore, can be two-fold, covering both physical and spiritual needs. In the first category will come films indicating the techniques of agriculture, food distribution, public hygiene, housing, etc., which are most appropriate to each re-occupied country. In the second category will come films to show what form of government it is proposed immediately to set up, what are the ideals of this government and what future is visualised for the country concerned, for the continent of Europe and for the world as a whole.

Some of the films in the first, the instructional, category are already in existence in this country and all that is needed is the preparation of foreign language versions. This is especially true of agricultural films. Some of those recently made in this country for the instruction of farm workers may show methods unsuitable for use overseas, but there are many suitable for export. A specially prepared series of agricultural films will, however, be needed to show how food shortages may be reduced by growing new crops appropriate to special local problems of nutrition. We have a few films on public health of which useful foreign versions could be made and circulated, but the number is woefully small. It is not too early to be making a series of films which will show how best to tackle coming continental problems of malnutrition and actual starvation. There must be films to show the medical profession and the general public how to face the increasing incidence of deficiency and nervous diseases; how to restore water supply and sanitation in devastated areas; how to carry out temporary housing schemes in devastated areas, employing whatever labour and materials may be available; how to compensate with temporary first-aid measures for an insufficient supply of doctors in areas where casualties are high or disease rife.

There are many more subjects for instructional films but those listed above indicate basic needs. Depending on circumstances and the country concerned there will be many special needs to be met at short notice. Film production machinery must therefore be flexible and speedy so that it can adjust itself to whatever conditions may be found. It must make use, wherever possible, of local technicians and equipment.

## Assess Public Mood

This instructional side of the film's job is much more simple and straightforward than the propaganda side. In propaganda we are concerned not only with what films should be shown but how to show them. It would, for example, be unwise to flood the cinemas of a re-occupied country with direct propaganda films as soon as the Allied armies take over. It will be necessary carefully to assess public mood and not to assume that cinematic demonstrations of allied power or presence will necessarily be popular. It is almost certain that the first instinct of a free people will be to relax. Whatever their political views they will be little interested in whether or not the Allies are brave, wise or human. They will in fact be most likely to believe in our good will if we come bearing lighter and more frivolous gifts. A wise policy would be to bring back to the screens of re-occupied and ex-enemy countries those Hollywood stars whom they will not have seen for so long. Bing Crosby and Gary Cooper are likely to provide a warmer and more welcome approach to sanity than a documentary dissertation on the Atlantic

Charter. With feature films (not necessarily new ones) the backbone of the new democratic programmes can be built. During this phase we shall be trying to create basic goodwill. And let us not assume that we shall everywhere find goodwill without working for it. It would be fatal to forget that not all the peoples we are to free from bondage will immediately prove anti-fascist—in the enemy countries we should be prepared to find ourselves faced, even after the war is won, by a pro-fascist majority. Such an anticipation may happily prove unjustified but it will be short-sighted not to prepare to meet it. Even the anti-fascists coming under our Allied control will not necessarily be pro-British or pro-American. They may be one or the other or neither. To our own eyes the crusading sword we bear may be a glittering weapon of pure virtue, but there will be many potential allies who will not have forgotten that Britain and the United States have in the past been associated with selfish imperialistic policies and who will remember the Anglo-Saxon political morality of pre-war years. We must never forget that behind us lies the policy of non-intervention in Spain, the Munich betrayal of Czechoslovakia and the earlier abandonments of Abyssinia and China. Moreover, some of the statesmen responsible for these policies still hold high office under the British Government and may even continue to do so when we sweep triumphantly across Europe. In these circumstances, dare we hope that our good intentions will be taken at once for granted?

## A Purge of Leadership

It may well be that without a purge of Allied leadership our propaganda in re-occupied Europe is, in any case, doomed to failure. We have only to look at North Africa to see that reactionary policies can lead to bitter cynicism not only in the re-occupied territory but in the Allied countries as well. Propagandists working for the reconstruction of Europe will find themselves faced with a well-nigh impossible task if the North African mistake is repeated.

If, however, a propaganda job is to be done behind the advancing Allied armies then we dare not wait to see what the political situation will be at the time of victory. Films must be planned, and indeed made now, and all we can do is to assume that the work of the propagandists will not be hopelessly handicapped by the machinations of diehard diplomats.

Clearly, films of fighting must be avoided. We must look forward not back, avoiding any temptation to present to continental audiences military triumphs of the preceding months which may seem to contrast with their own forced inactivity. Nor must we remind them that they owe their salvation to Allied military might. Gratitude is an emotion on which we will rebuild Europe at our peril. Our films must look forward to dignity and decency in the future rather than back to any version of the fable of St. George and the Dragon. If we have won the war our military power and sagacity will be taken for granted but the question of whether we possess the power and sagacity necessary to rebuild civilisation will still remain to be proved. Let us therefore make sure that we send to Europe a series of lively, warm, unpretentious films which show what we are doing in Britain and America about building, not simply the physical structure which the war has shattered, but a new conception of human relationships. Let us have films of people getting together to plan and carry out undertakings for themselves. Let us show with films of works committees and other democratic organisations that the spirit of eager initiative is still alive in the democracies hoping that from our example a similar spirit may be re-born in countries too long subordinated to the Nazi jackboot. Let us show that even during the war the British people were looking forward to a better post-war world—not simply a better post-war Britain; that victory was foreseen as a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Show that there was a time in Britain when the people were as interested in the Beverage Report as in the war news. Let all these films present their arguments in terms of ordinary people living and working in a community which they are themselves shaping. It will be clear that the people of Britain are not very different from those of other countries and this is the surest foundation on which to build post-war co-operation.

In addition to these films of the new spirit we must have something specific to say about the material shape of post-war organisation. Here the propagandist is in the hands of the statesmen. Unless the Century of the Common Man has become a real thing in our minds on the day of victory we have no message for Europe that amounts to more than a jumble of platitudes. At that time it will become clear whether the war was indeed worth winning. Re-occupied Europe will become the touchstone by which we will be able to tell whether our post-war aims are shadow or substance.

It is true that even without films dealing with fundamental political principles in the post-war world we can nevertheless show the peoples what form of civil and international machinery there

is to be and who is to operate it. Such films must be made in any case, but unless they are backed by films of fundamental principles they will be merely *ad hoc* and of no permanent consequence.

All that has gone before has been written on the assumption that the United Nations will be moving forward side by side with a commonly agreed policy for Europe. It must be recognised that at present no adequate agreement is within sight of achievement. If at the end of the war the Allies are following separate lines of policy then inevitably and disastrously each will make its own propaganda in the countries which it can seize and place under its own domination. Should this situation arise the task of any honest propagandist will necessarily be to work towards a conformity of principle between the Allies. Whether he will command sufficient strength to do so remains to be seen. Clearly it is the propagandist's vital task to strive towards unity of policy now while post-war plans are being made, conscious that the alternative will be to find himself on the day of victory concerned with the parochial differences of Giraud and de Gaulle, Molotoff and Cordell Hull, Chiang Kai Shek and Eden. And then the problem will be one, not of post-war propaganda, but of propaganda between this war and the next.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The Films Division and the Industry

IN THE cinemas we have lately observed what looks suspiciously like competition between the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and the commercial end of the industry. It may be only by chance that *Nine Men from Ealing* and the official Libyan film *Desert Victory* arrived on the screen within a couple of weeks of each other; it may be by chance too, that *Fires Were Started* from Crown and *The Bells Go Down* from Ealing (both about the A.F.S. in the blitz) are pre-released in the West End no more than a fortnight apart; but when one hears rumours of an official submarine picture racing for completion neck and neck with a commercial film on the same subject, the innocent observer may be forgiven for wondering if design as well as accident may not be at work. There are, of course, a number of possible explanations; but even if a production overlap is unavoidable—and frankly we do not see why it need be—surely when two feature films have been made on the same subject it should be a fairly simple matter to arrange that an interval elapse between the dates of their release. It is not simply a matter of commercial advantage and disadvantage. We are not concerned with whether overlapping at the box-office means decreased revenue for either party. A much more serious matter is the fortuitous distortion of propaganda emphases which may be caused by the plugging of one particular aspect of the war effort at the inevitable expense of others. It is obviously wrong if the public is suddenly made 100 per cent "A.F.S.-conscious" for no better reason than that two films about fire-fighting happen to have been completed at the same time.

We suspect that the trouble, like most of our propaganda troubles, is due to a reluctance on the part of the M.O.I. to impose any kind of plan. Officialdom's affection for the ideals of nineteenth century *laissez-faire* sometimes appears to tempt it to indulge in a little commercial competition of its own. Can it be that some official in the Films Division gets a certain sly satisfaction from beating commercial producers on the distribution post? If so it reveals a complete misconception of the duties and functions of the Films Division. The Director of the Films Division should be above the commercial battle. It is for him to see that overlaps do not occur, certainly not to be the cause of them. Has any attempt been made to consult with the industry on the production and distribution of propaganda films so that complete co-ordination of official and commercial production and distribution can be arranged? Is there any reason to suppose that the industry would be unwilling to co-operate in such planning? It is surely in everyone's

interests that production and distribution should not be chaotic and it is certainly the job of the M.O.I. to see that the stream of propaganda, from whatever source, is regulated and flows smoothly and evenly into the right channels.

### Look at the British Empire

CANADA, New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and India have all accepted the necessity of using the film as a method of telling the world about themselves and their war effort. Films or film material are received from all these countries but some of them lag behind the others in their appreciation of the necessity for the quality of the film to be good. Films cost money and manpower, films are considered an important propaganda weapon. To make a first class cameraman out of a beginner takes years; but to make a beginner into a competent shooter does not take more than a matter of months. If he has been a still cameraman before, the process is even quicker. It ought to be possible for Britain and America to invite a number of the war film-makers of the Empire to visit them for a concentrated course in practical cinematography. The benefits of such a scheme would be out of all proportion to the time and trouble necessary to put it into action. It could be done on an exchange basis so that no gaps in production need be caused. It may sound as though such an idea would be too difficult to carry out in the middle of a war. This is not necessarily true. It's surprising the number of people who manage to get about, many of them, not less than some financial Tycoons of the movie world, without any good reason.

### It'll be all right on the night

It will read better when we have a fuller treatment  
The shooting script will smooth that over  
It will look different when you see it on the screen  
We can cut away from that

A montage sequence will make all the difference  
But wait till you hear it with the music

It will look better when it's cut down

The opticals will smooth that out

There's nothing like a show copy for really judging a film

Wait till you see it in a proper cinema

It's not really the sort of film the critics ever like

We didn't make it for the West End

Well anyway its bound to make its cost nowadays

After all, old man, the treatment was pretty stinking, wasn't it?

# FILM OF THE MONTH

## "Fires Were Started"

*Fires Were Started* Production: Crown. Direction: Humphrey Jennings. Camera: C. Pennington-Richards. Sets: Edward Carriek. Music: William Alwyn. One hour. M.O.I.

Who would have thought that a film about the blitz could seem timely and important now? It is the great achievement of *Fires Were Started* that you're just as interested and the film means just as much now as if it had been made and shown in the middle of the raids; and it will mean just as much in a few years' time when the war is over. And this makes it, with the original *Merchant Seamen*, the best of the Crown films. Films like *Target for Tonight* or *Coastal Command* concentrated on the day to day routine, the organisational machinery of their subject. They were the typical official idea of propaganda, in which a thing like the close liaison of Admiralty and Coastal Command assumes a great importance and you have to show an Admiralty bloke popping out of his office every few minutes to visit Coastal Command, though he's got nothing to say when he gets there, just to prove to the public that they work closely together. The result is that these and similar films had a purely ephemeral how-the-wheels-go-round interest: to-day they're as dead as mutton. And what is worse, by concentrating on the organisation, they make propaganda only for bureaucracy. With a few small changes (such as different uniforms) they'd do equally well as German or Japanese propaganda—intrinsically they take sides no more than a Bren gun does. Now it is the great merit of *Fires Were Started* that it does take sides, that it is not afraid to come out with a confession of faith. Of course there is a certain amount (too much in fact) of people answering telephones, writing things on blackboards and moving little coloured discs about, but that's not what the film is really about; it's about men, how they live and how they die, how they work together on the job and how they live together off the job. And that will be just as interesting after the war is over as it is now.

The film is so good that it is a shame to have to pick holes; but it has bad faults, so let's get them over with. Writing of love, D. H. Lawrence made a savage attack on that solid old middle-class philosopher Benjamin Franklin for giving a lot of commonsense hints on how to "use venery". Lawrence's point, and he was perfectly right, was that love is a thing that exists on its own, has rights and duties of its own and is worthwhile for its own sake; it's debasing it to "use" it for some meagre middle-class end. In the same way Jennings has not been content to let the men and their job stand

for what they're worth; he's tried to tie up their heroism and their decency with the war effort in the shape of a munitions' ship leaving the dock safely next morning. Now there was not the least need to do that, Jennings did it before in *Heart of Britain* when he tried to sew up the cheerfulness and efficiency of the people we'd seen into a Whitley leaving to bomb Germany. It cannot be stated too firmly that people, their way of life and their qualities, can safely be left to stand on their own feet—they don't want this spurious veneer of war-time patriotism to provide their justification for existence. No doubt it was tenderness for official feelings that led Jennings to make so much of that munitions' ship, and also to make much of the fact that the A.F.S. was drawn from all classes, which is only a snivelling bureaucrat's point. But Jennings must be held entirely to blame for the three or four occasions when, with somebody playing the piano or reading or reciting poetry (in his worst *Words for Battle* manner) he goes all arty for a moment, then after a nervous glance at the embarrassed audience, his courage fails him and pretending that he didn't mean it really he proceeds to take the mike out of himself.

### Real and alive

Never mind, these faults in the end do not detract from what is the real strength of the film—the best handling of people on and off the job that we've seen in any British film. In spite of a couple of middle-class sore-thumbs, Jennings has got together as real and alive a collection of people (Cockneys mainly) as you could meet with anywhere. Maybe for the first time we have proper working-class dialogue on the screen and dialogue that's really getting there and meaning something. At a guess, his success arises from keeping his people together for days on end, watching them like a lynx and listening to them like a mass-observer, and building up the dialogue by rehearsing them for hours on end. Anyway, whatever he did, he's certainly got the goods this time. There's a cheerful ex-taxi driver whose good humour is based on the fact that he's got his feet firmly fixed on the ground and nothing that happens can shake his absolute command of the job. There's a bald-topped humourist whose liveliness and practical joking are absolutely invincible. And there's a man whose wife keeps a paper shop, whose long mock-miserable face, ape-long arms, and forthright way of putting on his scarf and pushing off on his bike, are a complete embodiment of the rough warm strength of the Cockney. And there's half a dozen more, including a sub-officer whose way of going

on with his men is a perfect pattern of how to run a job.

Perhaps the nicest thing about the film is that it shows us for the first time how a job gets done in England. People who talk scathingly about the British workman and think that anyone having a backstretch is slacking, have no idea how heavy work gets done—if they do half-an-hour's digging they tear at the job and end with blistered hands. They don't understand the slow run-up, the odd and essential cup of tea, the backchat and horseplay which go to make up the rhythm of heavy work, without which it cannot be done properly. As we watch these firemen by day, doing their routine chores, chatting, whistling and tripping each other, or at night on the job running out the branches, finding water, getting on the roof, methodically (it would look slowly to the ignorant), with complete physical confidence and control over their job and with a discipline that comes only from the job itself, we know we're seeing on the screen for the first time a true picture of how the English, the best and quickest workers in the world, really set about doing a job. And from this film the A.F.S. with its loose semi-naval disciplinary set-up, seems (or rather seemed) an ideal way of organising an important service.

There are plenty of other nice things in the film. The men coming to work, one on his bike, one stopping to pat a horse and so on, the arrival of the newcomer under the quizzical glances of the men in the yard and a bucket of water down his trousers to welcome him; the little touches of humour like the man and the dustbin, and perhaps, best of all, the morning after, with the tired, scorched, dirty men struggling to roll up the branches over piles of rubble and pools of water, their job nearly over for the moment, but only the prospect of a day cleaning up and another night of heat, dirt, wet and danger before them. As you watch this film, the certainty comes over you that it was just these men, running their job and their lives in just this way, who kept London from burning to the ground. And then you read of the new discipline that is being cooked up for the N.F.S., of polished buttons, belted and buttoned tunics and inspection before going on to the streets, and you read stories of the experienced commanders being replaced by "good disciplinarians", and you wonder if all this hi-de-hi discipline is going to be any good at putting the fires out. Anyway *Fires Were Started* is a fine and fruitful record of a way of living and doing a job that *did* work and of a discipline that came from the job itself, the only true discipline.

Technically the film is well photographed on the whole, the sets very good, the sound, except for one or two studio echoes, excellent, but the cutting a bit on the slapdash side. Its whole purpose is to get the men over; and that it does magnificently.

No. 12

# THE COUNTRY MAID AND HER MILK CAN



A Country Maid was walking along with a can of milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections. "The money for which I shall sell this milk will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove added, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market just at the time when poultry is always dear so that by the new year I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a new gown. Green—let me consider—yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner but no—I shall refuse every one of them, and with a disdainful toss turn from them." Transported with this idea, she could not forbear acting with her head the thought that thus passed in her mind when down came the can of milk, and all her imaginary happiness vanished in a moment.

---

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

## British Films Instruct New York Gardeners

*The following is from a brochure issued in New York by the Museum of Modern Art.*

NEW YORKERS who would like to spend a lunch hour or two learning how to dig, sow, plant, hedge, ditch, plough and furrow victory gardens will find very practical instruction on the subject at the Museum of Modern Art during the next two weeks. Since the outbreak of war in 1939 the United States has given large quantities of vegetable seeds to England, which now reciprocates by sending to this country ten short films which show in the most practical fashion how to get the maximum value from seeds and gardens, how to store vegetables for winter, in fact how to wage a victorious war with the weapon of food production.

Iris Barry, Curator of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, says of the series:

"These are the best instructional films I have seen, well-made and entirely practical yet full of human interest. Members of the staff of the Museum—a surprising number of whom are ardent weekend gardeners themselves—were so enthusiastic at a special showing that there seemed no alternative but to make them available at once to our Museum visitors.

"Apart from their practical value, I suspect that the films will tend to draw American audiences into closer sympathy with the common man and woman of England, shown coping with the same problems that confront us today. One of the most refreshing qualities of these films is the absence of the so-called Oxford accent. The commentary is spoken by plain people with plain voices remarkably easy on the ear."

The films are as follows: *How to Dig, Hedging, Sowing and Planting, Storing Vegetables Indoors, Storing Vegetables Outdoors, More Eggs from Your Hens, Ditching, A Way to Plough, Turn of the Furrow, Winter on the Farm.*

In the first group of films *How to Dig* will undoubtedly be for most New Yorkers an eye-opener on the unaccustomed subject of the proper use of a spade. The amount of footwork entailed in *Sowing and Planting* will be quite a revelation too. *More Eggs from Your Hens* goes beyond simple tips on utilizing every scrap of kitchen waste and provides personal appearances by several hard-working English backyard biddies.

The second group of films, on farming topics, makes clear what skill and economy lie at the root of England's handsome but sturdy hedges, and gives a forthright lesson on the right way to drain and ditch a field. Alarmingly calm and competent land-girls demonstrate efficient ploughing so that even a greenhorn can understand. Last and best of this group is *Winter on the Farm* in which an English farmer answers the question so often put by his city friends: "What do you do on the farm in winter-time?" His graphic facts and figures provide an unusually intimate and thought-provoking study of the economy and management of a typical small farm. The film also affords a strikingly beautiful glimpse of rural existence and of its problems, which prove to be much the same as for the comparable American farmer.



# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Covering with Affection.** Film Advisory Board, Bombay. *Producer:* Shantaram. *Director:* Bhaskar Rao. *Commentary:* A. F. Stalyarkhan. 11 mins.

*Subject:* Making blankets for Indian soldiers. *Treatment:* It doesn't sound a likely subject, but it's a competent film. Covering blanket making, from sheep to soldier, the film manages to pack in a lot of good shots of Indian people and their background. Excellent exterior camera work and good editing (neither of which are mentioned on the credits) overcome the defects of the studio opening and the clever-clever commentary.

*Propaganda value:* Good. We hope to see many more films of this quality from India. Starting with last year's batch of films, such as *Changing Face of India* and *Made in India*, there seems to be a new spirit and vitality in Indian short film production.

*Note:* The film is to be re-commentated before being shown over here.

**Debris Tunnelling.** *Production:* Shell Film Unit. *Director:* Kay Mander. *Camera:* W. Suschitzky. *Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 19 mins.

*Subject:* How to get people from under the debris of bombed buildings by means of a tunnel. *Treatment:* One must certainly hand it to the Shell Unit. Here is a subject that might well have baffled the toughest director. The process of tunnelling is long, repetitious and difficult to understand. Any technical mistake would be glaringly apparent to the specialised audiences for whom the film is intended and there was no place for any dramatic flourishes. But were Shell and Miss Mander daunted? Of course not. Nails are driven into wood, wood is driven into debris, processes are driven into the audience. I could build a tunnel, you could build a tunnel and I wouldn't be surprised if the Shell Film Unit didn't actually build one to see how it went. It's a nightmare film. Cold, dry and technical as it is, it borders on the edge of lunacy. The word *debris* covers a lot of things and tunnelling through it means perhaps working through a cupboard or a sideboard, it involves questions of what is in drawers because it is obviously more difficult to tunnel through a cupboard stuffed with tinned salmon than through one filled with evening dresses. You are not only tunnelling through bricks, but through the sudden broken strata of people's lives. Like entering a house through the gas oven or finding yourself in somebody else's bottom drawer.

But why do Shell persist in using amateur commentators? It's a nice idea of course, but the voice tends to be that of the Ancient Mariner instead of Scherezade. It is better to be beguiled than buttonholled.

*Propaganda value:* Excellent instructional but they might have told us how long it takes to build a tunnel. One never knows when the knowledge might be good for one's morale.

**Stooking and Stacking.** *Production:* Realist Film Unit. *Director:* Rosanne Hunter. *Camera:* A. E. Jenkins. *Commentary:* Finlay Currie. M.O.I. 13 mins.

*Subject:* The importance of good stooking and stacking and the right way to do it.

*Treatment:* Ably following in the experienced

footsteps of Miss Thompson, Rosanne Hunter has turned out yet another of the excellent agricultural film series. The exposition is clear, the camera work excellent and the subject easily and unobtrusively well directed. Only once did there seem to be a lapse and that was when the commentator, in his rather wee wain's voice, was talking of the importance of building the stooks up to the centre. To the ignorant critic it looked very definitely as though the men were doing the opposite and making a depression in the middle of the stack.

*Propaganda value:* The film should be invaluable in teaching new agricultural workers 'how to do it', and it will perhaps remind old hands of a thing or two they have forgotten.

*Extract from TIME, March 15*

**At the Front in North Africa** (U.S. Signal Corps—Warner) might be more appropriately entitled "Darryl Zanuck's War". A Technicolor panorama of the early stages of the North African invasion, it was filmed by 42nd Signal Corps photographers under Cinémaestro Zanuck's personal direction. It has all the Zanuck fingerprints: it is flamboyant, melodramatic, sometimes corny, sometimes hysterical—but never dull. A pretty picture, it never approaches the unvarnished realism of the best Nazi or Soviet war films.

The film covers the North African campaign comprehensively. It begins with a review of French and Arab soldiers who greeted the U.S. troops in Algiers, ends with a front line view of the first major contact of U.S. and German forces: a tank battle at Tebourba. There, from a hilltop that looks little more than a grenade-throw from the battlefield, the camera watches a group of Nazi tanks deployed in a small valley. German cannon, concealed in straw-thatched sheds fire at approaching U.S. tanks. Then U.S. artillery takes effect; the Nazi tanks turn tail (their tails are painted red to identify them for their own planes). As they crawl away, one Nazi tank is smacked by a direct hit, spins helplessly on its tracks.

But the film's most exciting shots are those of air battles. *At the Front* has some of the most detailed close-ups of attacking planes yet seen on the screen. It shows low-level enemy attacks so close that bombs can be seen falling from the bomb bays. Again and again enemy planes, machine guns spitting, dive head on at the camera. The camera shows the results: Allied trucks flaring up in brilliant orange and red flame, wounded soldiers being picked up, men milling in shock.

These shots and the sound effects are the best things in *At the Front*. But Zanuck, invincibly Hollywood-minded, tried to dress up the film with arty shots of tank treads, dawns, sunsets, and many another ill-placed frippery.

When *At the Front* reached U.S. cinema houses, Colonel Zanuck himself was not quite satisfied. Wrote he in his log: "I don't suppose our war scenes will look as savage or realistic as those we usually make on the back lot, but you can't have everything."

\**Tunis Expedition* (Random House—\$2), to be published next month.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY SIXPENCE

VOL. 4 NO. 4, 1943

## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London**, in association with **American Film Centre, New York**.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey  
Alexander Shaw  
Donald Taylor  
John Taylor  
Basil Wright

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

*Owned and published by*

**FILM CENTRE LTD.**  
**34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON**

W.1 GERRARD 4253

# Documentary Developments In America

by Donald Slesinger (from *National Board of Review Magazine*)

**I** REPRESENT a very minor branch of the motion picture industry. We have no Music Halls, no Clark Gables; and none of us was troubled by the President's \$25,000 salary limitation order. Our audiences create no traffic problem. And very few States bother to censor what we show. We can't even claim to be something new under the sun. Rather we are a throwback to first principles in the cinema, before actors were used; when the camera's chief function seemed to be to record, to testify—or as we like to say now, to document. You will see how really insignificant we are when I tell you that we used only some 20 million feet of film last year out of a billion and a half.

Yet there seems to be some glamour about our work. Not in the fan magazines—but among the technicians and creative artist in the industry. In the last year and a half, dozens of first-rate Hollywood workers have stopped in my office to wonder how they could get into documentary production. Sam Spewack came over to make documentaries for the Office of War Information Film Bureau; Frank Capra is doing it for the Army, John Ford for the Navy; Robert Riskin is doing it for our overseas programme; and Kenneth MacGowan has just completed a documentary sabaccball with the Co-ordinator of Inter-American affairs. There are countless others in the armed forces and in civilian branches of government. Some are in little organizations in New York, Chicago, Hollywood itself. And with all the irritation of small budgets, government red tape and sponsors they seem to be satisfied that what they are doing is important.

I use these famous names that have glamour for all of us, because the documentary film has glamour for them. Although some of them may one day be, they are not yet leaders in this new field. Standards are still being set by people that are relatively unknown—people like Willard Van Dyke, Henwar Rodakiewicz, Ralph Steiner—and soon once again (I hope) Pare Lorentz. Why is the documentary film and what is happening to it to-day so fascinating to so many?

Perhaps a glance at the audiences will give us a clue. I have said that it was small in comparison with the one that patronises the theatres. But it is composed of people who are earnestly using the film for new experience—new knowledge. Farmers will travel miles after work to a grange or village hall to learn about rural electrification or forest fire control; doctors come to study new techniques in medicine and surgery; school children learn something about the world they live in; adults study their jobs or their fellow men. Day after day, night after night, in small groups of 30 or 40, from 4 to 500 they gather wherever there is darkness, electricity and a few chairs. And they often stay after the lights go on to talk about what they have seen, discuss the problems presented—even occasionally vote to do something about it. Making a film for that kind of audience puts a man in almost personal contact with the people he is addressing. And their talk, though he may never hear it, is a

personal response. That is the first fascination of this field.

The second is its complete freedom of subject matter. We are not concerned with who will be entertained or who will be offended. We neither expect nor want a universal audience for every film. We are in the position of the writer or columnist who has something he wants to say—and a medium in which to say it. So our first preoccupation is with the world we live in—and we tell about the parts of that world we understand or love or hate. The film thus is a potent means whereby we may say what we think and feel to others on a direct personal basis. Of course we don't always think socially, or clearly. And often we fumble with our medium. But so do writers and talkers. We are no better than we are. We have no single philosophy or co-ordinated social aim any more than do radio broadcasters. Our common ground is a medium that is concrete, real, persuasive.

Those two fascinations have always existed. But there were problems outside of production that had to be solved before the documentary or fact film (and I use the term in a broad sense to include even training) could come into its own. Resources and drive were lacking and though we should like to say that we finally furnished both ourselves, the truth is that Hitler did it for us. For he created a world situation that made it imperative for our country to develop to the full all of our communication resources. The airplane and the non-theatrical film have jumped ahead 20 years under the terrific pressure of war.

Distribution has always been a knotty problem. Facilities existed all over the country, but they were completely unco-ordinated. Under the leadership of the Film Bureau of the Office of War Information a lot of loose ends are being drawn together to make a national non-theatrical set-up. To aid the Government, and to do their own pre- and post-war job more effectively, the State film libraries are building up a vast non-theatrical co-operative. According to recent reports these libraries, with the 20,000, mostly mobile, projectors available to them, reach a national audience of over 30 million people who look at films because they want something other than entertainment. The Army and Navy show films to millions for training and orientation. Other millions learn about our war effort and are trained in techniques of civilian defence by government films; still others are trained to do better jobs in industry. We have now reached a point where a civilian agency upon completion of a film immediately releases from 500 to 750 prints, and the prints are worked over time.

We have learned too, that the film is a common basic language. The Germans used them to spread fear and hate. We are using them to develop a common understanding. And we are sending prints to the remote corners of the earth—China, India, Egypt, Australia, South America; prints of films that try earnestly and honestly to tell the world our right names. The war has made an esoteric journalism into a universal means of communication.

When the war ends we shall have developed

a system of world-wide communication through the documentary film. And in this country the main network will probably be in the hands of the non-profit film libraries. This network will make moderate cost production pay a moderate profit so that the field will gradually cease to depend upon government enterprise. The flexible mobile distribution will carry films to small towns and rural areas that do not now have theatres. This will, of course, be a challenge to the theatrical part of the motion picture industry to serve all levels of age, intelligence, economics and every point of view, instead of the mythical average it serves now. For if the theatrical motion picture industry doesn't, the non-theatrical motion picture industry will find ways of making production earn its way even if it appeals to only one section of the population.

There is no reason why the motion picture industry should not feel the same responsibility to all the public that the book publishing industry feels. Indeed, if it did it would bring into the theatres a vast audience that now scarcely ever attends.

I hope the theatrical section of the movie industry will take care of that problem. For, if I could, I should like to see us remain unambitious and even poor. We are teachers primarily and what we have to do is too important to turn aside from now, or after the war is over. When peace comes we shall share with other teachers using other media of communication the tremendous job of educating citizens of the post-war world. To do that we must concentrate on our problem, which is first—what to say—then to whom it must be said, and finally how it can best be said to many special audiences. And we must keep our medium free of both economic and governmental domination so that the best minds in the country will use it freely in the interest of the public good.

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SUMMER ISSUE

FILMS IN SWEDEN  
A PLEA for D. W. GRIFFITH  
CHILDREN'S CINEMA  
EIRE

6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

# STORY OF A RUSSIAN MOVIE MAN

## Filming the Battle for Moscow

*From the diary of Feodor Bunimovich*

*From the "American Cinematographer"*

For many weeks now we have lived in a car, listening to the purring of its engine, occasionally verifying whether the spring and tyres are in good shape. There were three of us: cameraman Pavel Kasatkin, driver Pavel Shishko, and myself. We trust our old car despite several holes made by mine fragments, a twisted running board, smashed headlights, throbbing valves. There was not a single instance when she went back on us.

As if subject to the laws of mimicry, she has already changed her colouring three times. Originally black, she became a spotted green. Then, with the arrival of autumn, Shishko smeared her with mud and she became grey and quite invisible on dusty country roads or amid naked trees. When snow fell she changed into a white coat. Such are the requirements of camouflage.

After a two-hour ride we reach the first village where we stay for the night. In the morning we proceed into the thick of a forest where we find a well-equipped hospital. Dr. Merkulov, head of the surgical division, meets us with an apology, "I am sorry, but I cannot talk to you now. I haven't slept since yesterday and there is still a lot of work to do. Decide for yourselves what you want to film."

At headquarters we were told that a trench mortar battery commanded by Semenov had fired eighty projectiles during the day, destroying two enemy machine-gun nests, two dugouts and a large number of men. Semenov was somewhere in the front detecting the enemy's gun emplacements. The battery was silent. I informed the commander over the telephone that motion picture cameramen were visiting the battery.

"Wait a bit," he replied, "we will establish the enemy position in a moment and then we will be ready to welcome you."

A little while later the order came for the battery to open fire on two enemy fortifications. One shot was fired, which we filmed. Then the range was somewhat changed and a second shot fired. The man in charge of the battery told us, "That apparently was adjustment fire. In a moment we will probably open fire from the whole battery. Get ready..."

We took up advantageous positions for filming and held the cameras in readiness. Ten minutes passed... Fifteen minutes... No order came to open fire. I again rang up the observation point. The reply was: "First two shots fired destroyed both enemy fortifications. There is no need for more fire."

An episode for a newsreel was thus quite abbreviated. It was a success scored for the mortarmen, but it left us nothing to boast of...

The first time we met him was at the front line. I saw a Red Army man running from the side of the enemy. Now and then he fell, rose, crawled. He was not wounded—why then he was he running from the battlefield?

Only when he got to the trenches and lay next to me I realised that he was a signalman

He looked not more than twenty years of age. His big blue eyes were naive and his smile shy. His face and hands were covered with clots of sticky mud. As he lay near me he tried to regain his breath as soon as possible, in order to continue on his way. My questions he answered in monosyllables and obviously unwillingly. Several days later, in conversation with Battalion Commissar Storozh I mentioned the signalman I had seen.

"Why, that must be Fedoseyev!" exclaimed Storozh, "he is a wonderful fighter, bold, resourceful, finds his bearings quickly in any situation and under any conditions. There were instances when Fedoseyev made his way toward a tank that had gone far ahead, climbed up from the rear toward the turret, knocked as had been previously arranged. The tank crew then transmitted through him all the necessary information. You and your friends will do the right thing filming him in action."

### In Action

We managed to film Fedoseyev as he was taking a report from the front line. Shell explosions did not deter him. In the most dangerous spots he dropped down and crawled on. His face was all scratches, and on his brow—despite a cold, penetrating wind—were visible large drops of perspiration. We see him running across a field toward a country road, darting into the bushes where his motorcycle is hidden. He starts the machine. His report will be delivered on time...

Carrying a white flag of truce a lieutenant of Yarokhin's brigade and an accompanying Red Army man crossed the front line. The lieutenant had a perfect command of German. Explaining to the German patrol that they were bearers of a truce flag, he asked to be taken to Colonel Neudind.

"You are surrounded," said the lieutenant, "to avoid unnecessary bloodshed the Red Army command urges you to surrender."

Indeed, Klin was then in an iron ring.

To the Germans, Klin was an important strategic point—it served as a forwarding center for supplying the German army which had been assigned the task of enveloping Moscow. After losing 250 tanks, about 1,000 trucks, more than 100 medium and heavy guns and a great number of men, the German army was in retreat. However, the Germans disliked the idea of withdrawing from Klin. The negotiations brought no result and Soviet troops launched an assault.

Major General Chernyshev's troops attacked from the north, Colonel Lukhtikov's troops from the east and Major General Ivanov's mounted group from the south. Four days later Klin fell. Colonel Neudind fled westward, leaving over a thousand men killed.

We are now proceeding along this road. One or two miles from Klin we came across the first traces of the Germans' "planned" retreat. In ditches lie twelve cars with the

wheels turned upward, two heavy guns, one medium sized tank.

A car in front—judging by the scattered documents and maps, a staff car—was hit by a shell and blocked the road. The trucks following were stalled. Our artillery in the meantime had continued to shell the column. The frantic Germans threw into the ditches not only the smashed cars, but some that were in perfect working order. All strove to get clear of the fire and abandoned everything. One German soldier, stricken by a bullet, remained petrified in a running attitude.

As we proceeded further along the road we came across even larger numbers of dead German soldiers and abandoned cars, guns, tanks.

With difficulty we got as far as the village of Petrovskoye before nightfall. A vast field was covered with enemy machines. Kasatkin mounted one of them and filmed this amazing panorama from practically every angle...

When we approached Klin our troops were entering the town. Automatic riflemen wearing white robes, cavalry, artillery, advanced past smashed and deserted German trucks and tanks, past demolished buildings, past numerous crosses with German helmets—frightful traces of the "victorious" retreat of the Germans.

We filmed the entry of the Red Army troops into Klin from the roof of our car. Then we proceeded toward Tchaikovsky's house where lived and worked the great composer. We found the gates smashed, the fence broken—apparently the place was used as a tank garage. Near the entrance lay a German motor-cycle and alongside it, scattered in the snow, were manuscripts and Tchaikovsky's broken bust. In the rooms where Tchaikovsky had created works of genius, the Germans repaired motor-cycles. The wall panels of Karelian birch were torn off, all wooden objects burned, stage models smashed.

"The German soldiers took a special fancy for a model of the ballet stage production, *Swan Lake*," explained the director of the museum, "they extracted all the figures of dancers and fought over the division."

Klin is practically burned to the ground. Before retreating the Germans blew up the bridge and even the town's new polyclinic. Near its iron fence we met a woman in tears—she was the polyclinic's head doctor.

### Cakes for Red Army

The Klin inhabitants rejoiced and gave a rousing welcome to the Red Army, which brought them liberation. Everyone tried to express appreciation by bringing presents. When a truck with Red Army men halted near Tchaikovsky's house a woman brought out a big plate of cakes for the men...

Artillery fire had somewhat subsided, the rumbling receding ever farther into the enemy's positions.

From the forest on the right our tanks appear, crushing trees as they rush forward. It is a tank regiment going into action—the regiment to which we knew our friend Gureyev has returned.

The tanks are followed by infantry. Groups of men are scattered all over the battlefield. Shouting. "Hurrah! For our country, for

**(Russian Diary cont.)**

Stalin!" men rise from the trenches and dash forward.

One minute ago these men were pressed close to the walls of the trenches, shrinking at the loud whining of shells. Now in a burst of enthusiasm they are rushing forward against the enemy, paying no attention to exploding mines all around. One commander shouts something, brandishing his revolver. Then he falls, apparently wounded in one leg, rises on the other and continues to shout, urging his men on. We, too, swept by the general enthusiasm, rise from the trenches and begin filming the engagement.

That day the enemy in our sector wavered and began to fall back. . . .

Shock troops of Major General Zakhvatiev were engaged in a battle for the village of Spasomazkino. We left our car in a deep ravine about a mile and a half from the village. The road toward the village was kept under strong fire. Very often we had to crawl and snow got into our felt boots, sheepskin coat sleeves and camera. The camera's mechanism was affected by frost and for each filming it was necessary, while lying in the snow, to warm it beneath the sheepskin. A battle was being fought on the outskirts of the village. Our men were vigorously dislodging German automatic riflemen from all shelters.

Near the school we beheld a terrible picture which we will never forget. Thrown together in a heap lay the dead bodies of old men, women and children. Some had legs and arms broken, others disfigured faces. All had been shot with automatic rifles. Somewhat aside lay embraced

an old peasant and a young woman with an infant in her arms. Why had those people been shot? The infant had apparently been wrapped in a kerchief or blanket. This the Germans had torn off, and the woman had pressed the naked body of her infant daughter to her own. Bullets had pierced the child's shoulder and breast, the blood was congealed in scarlet strips.

Our men, their automatic rifles still steaming, stopped near the dead and then silently, with lips compressed, proceeded to the place from which came the noise of rifle shots and reports of exploding hand grenades. Soon German resistance was broken and our troops, advancing in a long column, entered the village. . . .

Below I see black dots in motion. These are German soldiers scurrying in all directions.

I scarcely manage to turn aside somewhat before the gunner opens machine-gun fire upon the dispersing enemy infantry and machines. Then discerning something in a side window, he goes up toward a machine-gun and opens fire. "A fascist plane," I say to myself. Two of our pursuit planes pass above us, heading straight for the enemy. As if racing they keep overtaking each other. I prepare the camera for filming.

A bright sun shines straight into the cockpit. It has dispelled the mist and several rays are on the gunner's smiling face. The plane flies smoothly, confidently. We pass over enemy positions. Below we see several explosions of anti-aircraft shells. The Germans apparently collected their wits and decided to ambush us on the way back.

For three days after that we filmed the life of fighting fliers. . . . We motion-picture cameramen flew in two separate planes.

Each of us took up a position in the rear of

the cockpit of the dive bombers alongside the gunner and wireless operator. Each motion and turn were figured out beforehand so that we could do our work and not be in the way of the gunner. Over us flew pursuit planes guarding the heavier machines.

Two enemy planes, Junkers 88's, appear in front of us. They avoid an engagement. I descend to the lower hatch where I squeeze alongside the machine-gun. The pose is rather unusual: feet resting on the seat above and head below, pressing against the machine-gun. Eyes water, there is a rush of blood to the head.

A long ribbon road cuts the snowy waste. There are black dots on the road—tanks and lorries. Somewhat farther away we discern a river crossing.

Bombs are released from the plane. Many bombs. They drop with a rush, and in a few seconds flashes of explosions appear along tank and infantry columns. One bomb hits a crossing. Soon fires burst out. The fascist lorries and tanks are burning. I grip the camera and film in a sort of frenzy, overcome with the hatred I feel for the enemies of my country.

Our plane climbs a bit, makes a turn and then dives. A noiseless drop along the incline, accompanied by the howling of a wind which within a fraction of a second swells into a roar. I can hardly catch my breath and my eyes smart. An invisible force pins me to the board and seems to be breaking my body. Then the plane straightens out. . . .

**Book Review**

MAN AND BOY. By Sir Stephen Tallents, *Faber & Faber*, 21s.

Those who have read *The Projection of Britain* will confidently expect good prose in this book; those who have worked with its author will expect a good deal of brisk and energetic action in which the rapier rather than the singletie is the symbolic weapon. Neither will be disappointed.

Many documentary workers—aware perhaps only of Tallents' inspired pioneering at the E.M.B. and of his determined championship, against much opposition and more incomprehension, of the documentary film movement, will be duly astonished to read, in this autobiography of his earlier life, that he served in the Irish Guards and was wounded in France 1915; that he subsequently organised Britain's first food rationing scheme, in the company of such diverse people as Beveridge and Walter de la Mare; and that he was the key representative of the Allies during the confused post-war period in the newly formed Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and was governor of Riga at a time when Bolsheviks, Latvians and Germans were fighting each other with grim but lunatic determination. In addition there is an admirable picture of Tallents' childhood and education which has a curious sense of universality about some of its memories; for he has hit on the type of childhood episodes common to all.

The book ends in 1919. We shall therefore, look forward with an interest which much exceeds any local trepidation, to a second volume, which will bring fully into contemporary perspective the further activities of a man whose abilities have been only too frequently miscalculated or misprized by lesser men who depend on their entrenching tools and have forgotten the horizon.

**★ For your information**

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders—and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**Kinematograph  
WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2



# SCIENTIFIC FILMS IN WAR-TIME

INTERCHANGE of expert technical information is one of the permanent and important foundations of international unity. "Shop" is the one universal language; and the hieroglyphics of the mathematician, the biologist, the chemist, and even today the philosopher, are more equally intelligible than all the Volapuks and Esperantos. Nowhere, however, is this *lingua franca* of the specialist better illustrated than in the visual terms of the motion picture. The movies can be as valid for the footballer as for the surgeon, for the philatelist as for the physicist.

In war-time there are a thousand and one points of scientific and technical importance which must be quickly and efficiently interchanged between the various United Nations; and in many cases one nation will have special war experiences of its own, the detailing of which to others is of enormous practical value. A.R.P. measures, rationing and nutrition are random examples. But now especially important are the fields of scientific research and discovery, whether in the laboratory or on the battlefield. New techniques, for instance, in the treatment of wounds under arctic or tropical conditions can be quickly and accurately disseminated, with the help of films. Thus what was discovered by grim experiences in Russia may be quickly transmitted to surgeons in Alaska; and the sufferings of men alleviated more quickly in the Pacific islands thanks to a visual exposition of methods developed in the African desert.

Examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely. What is more important is to realise that such films have a moral as well as a practical value, and may be regarded by each producing country as being first class propaganda—often in a sense far wider than that contained in their official terms of reference.

In fact such films are in many ways the perfect example of information and morale-propaganda combined.

Somewhat belatedly, but none the less very sensibly, more and more attention is now being paid to the development of this line of film work in Britain. There is much we can give the world in many varied fields, and it is good to learn that a number of subjects are now in production (or already completed)—some of them of direct use in training or instruction, others detailing experiments or new techniques for the benefit of the skilled experts.

Based as they are on the vital needs of a nation mobilised for war, these scientific films should represent excellent value for money expended, even in the eyes of the Treasury. A glance at the Soviet scientific films which are now in this country is sufficient to prove that scientific validity here goes hand in hand with good propaganda. For instance, the justly famous film of the resuscitation of a dog of first-class Soviet propaganda—and it is a solemn thought that we might well have made the same film ourselves in this country—but didn't.

There is indeed much we can learn from Russia in this matter. One of the most significant facts is that not merely specialist personnel but also specialist studios and equipment are available for the making of scientific films. So it should be in Britain too, if this country, as it should, is to give a strong international lead to the use of films in relation to science.

It is not too soon to formulate the structure of an international organisation for the post-war world; but in order to do this the immediate national action must first be taken. The activities of Government Departments, commercial sponsors and other organisations need co-ordination—a job which might well be undertaken by the Association of Scientific Workers in some form of liaison with the Ministry of Information. There is much to be done, and the sooner a start is made the better.

A conference has been called by the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers to discuss the possibility of setting up an English Scientific Films Association. Such a body would clearly be of great value in the field of work indicated in these notes and we hope to publish a full report of the conference in our next issue.

## Book Review

FILMS FOR THE COMMUNITY IN WARTIME. By Mary Losey. Published by National Board of Review in U.S.A. Price 50c.

Mary Losey has written a lively and imaginative guide to the war-time use of the film under the title of *Films for the Community in War-time*. It is intended for U.S. readers but contains many practical hints on programme selection and methods of presentation which will be of interest and value to anyone in this country who is concerned with propaganda or the use of the film for public instruction. The bulk of the book consists of recommended film programmes each designed to achieve a specific purpose. There are programmes of documentaries which will explain to the people of the United States the mind and face of their Allies in Great Britain, U.S.S.R., China, Canada, etc.; there are programmes to explain "Global Warfare", "Total Warfare", "The Nature of Life in the Armed Forces", and so on. British documentaries are featured generously and the book includes a synopsis of every film mentioned. The programme chosen to explain Great Britain to our American Allies is of particular interest. It consists of *Listen to Britain*, *Citizens' Army*, *Winter on the Farm*, *War-time Factory*, and *Newspaper Train*. This programme is described as a 60-minute *Guide to Britain*. Miss Losey has necessarily selected her programmes from those films available in the United States at the time of writing.

The book includes chapters on various functions of the film including such headings as "Instruction", "Persuasion or Morale Building" and "Information and Exhortation". It has something to say about the mechanics of projection and there are excellent hints on good non-theatrical showmanship. Miss Losey makes clear her purpose in writing the book in her opening paragraphs:—

"Films can help to win the war, if we use them intelligently. In this pamphlet we shall be talking about the use of films for fuller participation in the war effort by civilian adult and young people's groups—by schools, libraries, Y's, churches, motion picture clubs, forums, civilian defense councils, service clubs, social agencies, trade unions, women's clubs.

"The first idea which embraces all others is the fact of our involvement in a violent world war. A war of such enormity that none of us can fully understand or be fully informed. Only by exchanging the fragments of knowledge of the worker, farmer, soldier, teacher, doctor, industrialist, grocer, geographer, housewife, sailor and all the other specialists you can mention, will we begin to put together the scattered parts of the puzzle and see the war as a whole. And when we see its wholeness involving the lives and the futures of all the people in the world we will begin to understand it."

## Correspondence

DEAR SIR,

You may be interested in the enclosed copy of my report to my Executive Committee on a Course on the Film given to local units under the Army Education scheme.

### Report on Course "The Film Then and Now"

This course was initiated as the result of casual shows under the category "Entertainment" to several local army units. I felt that something more in the nature of a connected series of shows would be well received and I discussed this with the Army Education authorities. Two local Education Officers agreed to take the course: the one to three units, the other to two. The Regional Committee for Education in H.M. Forces gave authorisation for transport and paid the lecturer's fee towards the cost of film hire.

The plan I had in mind was to begin with historical material—the film to 1914, the growth of the cartoon, the documentary film, the films of Chaplin and after acquainting the audiences to this (for them) new technique of talking about films, pass on to films grouped to illustrate subjects. This will be seen in the programmes listed below.

Much space could be given to the incidents of projection from snowy sites to country houses, on all sorts of current supplies and to the most fluctuating audiences: commonplaces of Army Education. More interesting was the reception: no one believed that this was education, the general belief being that we had pulled one over the authorities and that it was all entertainment disguised. I think the only thing which did anything to help this myth was a very restless show of *Last Laugh* in which I was certainly not the least bored person in the room.

My forecasts of reception were often upset: the early cinema material got a poor reception and *Film and Reality* failed to arouse the enthusiasm I had myself (this may have been a failure of mine): *Femme du Boulanger* went over well, although I was nervous of it; *Thunder over Mexico* was liked; but the biggest applause of all the course was given to a film which started off with all the disadvantages of being German, sung in a foreign language and needing a plot outline beforehand—Lotte Reiniger's *Papageno*.

Foreign films did not seem to be too much of an obstacle and the only person who objected to our showing German films was a W.V.S. driver.

The course is to be repeated this term to an R.A.F. audience and to a civilian class here.

M. W. BERSFORD,  
Perivall Guildhouse,  
Rugby

(A Community Centre for Adult Education)

# A LETTER TO DOCUMENTARY

from Arthur Elton

two things were recently delivered to the M.O.I.—the February issue of *D.N.L.* and a training film called *Debris Tunnelling*, useful not only at home, but in every English-speaking country. The February issue contained a leading article "based on material supplied by several correspondents in the United States" which states: "... our method of presentation [of films to the U.S.A.] is usually wrong. Much of our vernacular is unintelligible to U.S. audiences; some of our accents sound sissy and irritating to them." *Debris Tunnelling* had a commentary spoken in a West Country dialect. Since the producer of *Debris Tunnelling* is a member of the Editorial Board, I must assume that he does not support the leading article in his own paper. Or may I hope that he suffered a twinge of conscience before the paper went to bed?

Another member of the Editorial Board manages one of the best documentary units in the country. Their films are sensitive and human. Yet this unit has made itself master of the mumble, and has argued from time to time that the Empire and the United States should be made to understand our lingo, and that we should not translate ourselves for our Allies. I hope that this member of the Board also had a twinge of conscience, and that he now supports the views of your correspondents. One or two of this Unit's films, by the way, will not only be incomprehensible in the United States and the Em-

pire, but difficult to follow in many parts of Great Britain as well. Last year they made what I believe to be, with *Nine Men*, one of the best documentary films that has yet been produced. I mean *The Harvest Shall Come*. This film was taken over by the Ministry of Information and shown widely. The reports of its success were unanimous. So were the reports that many audiences could not easily follow the speech. The film was played by actors, but they spoke in a stagey Suffolk dialect. Fortunately, the virtues of the film overcame the handicaps, and triumphed over its obscurity.

The article goes on: "Our tempo is too slow for what they (the Americans) believe to be their hustling way of life. As a result our films lack speed, punch, attack and news value—all of which are marketable commodities in the U.S.A." This criticism is valid—and only the editors of *D.N.L.* and their colleagues can put it right. If themes and subjects are wrong, that is the fault of Films Division. But if technical treatment is wrong, that is the fault of the makers.

Hitherto documentary has turned to natural types because they are "real" and convincing; and because the audiences reached have been, on the whole, relatively small, sympathetic and ready to meet documentary halfway. To-day things are different. If, for example, a film is to be made about Joint Production Committees, better the whole world should get the message from ham

actors, than only half the world the message from the managers and workers themselves. I watch both with respect and dismay valiant efforts to turn our neighbours into actors. I am respectful because I know the difficulties which a director of natural types, such as Humphrey Jennings, often so brilliantly overcomes. I am dismayed because I think that this path can end in a brick wall.

Not that I suggest the jettisoning the use of people as people, but only that, if people cannot be persuaded to act or to speak clearly so that everyone can understand, then it is better to use good actors than to turn ordinary people into bad actors. In short, what documentary needs, and what it is slowly—too slowly—finding, is a school of documentary *acting* which will allow it to take advantage of the technique of the studio and everything which goes with it.

I believe that documentary will solve the problem because it has kept its vitality and strength. But the question which to-day still faces every documentary director has yet to be decisively answered. Is documentary going to build on the substantial foundations it has laid over the last fifteen years? Or is it going to hand over its technical achievements to the fiction school of films, allowing documentary technique to become separated from the basic ideas which created them.

ARTHUR ELTON

(Films Division, M.O.I.)

## G.B. INSTRUCTIONAL LTD.

*The Studios*

LIME GROVE . . SHEPHERDS BUSH, W.12

*Working for*

ADMIRALTY . . . WAR OFFICE

AIR MINISTRY

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

BRITISH COUNCIL

• •

\*Grams:

GEBESTRUCT CHISK, LONDON.

\*Phone:

SHEPHERDS BUSH 1210

## Stock Rationing and Film Trailers

Following upon the note in our last issue on stock rationing, film trailers and Mr. Paul Kimberley's National Screen Service, a reader has sent us the following extract from "Tatler's" page in *The Daily Film Review* of February 22nd:

"One thing that has afforded me some considerable amusement is that, when I was in Liverpool the other week, I wondered why—and that applied to quite a few other people—Paul Kimberley happened to be up in the Merseyside city at that particular juncture. It seemed to be almost more than a coincidence. Here were the trailers being discussed at General Council, and lo and behold! Paul makes a dramatic appearance, although I should have thought his duties as Director of Army Kinematography would have made his journey quite impossible.

Trailers were considered and, in response to the urgings of many delegates that they ought automatically to be thrown out, they had a stalwart defender in Fuller. Paul loomed large at the luncheon, even being called upon to make a speech—and I still couldn't understand—nor could quite a lot of other people. When I tackled the worthy General Secretary on it a day or two back, I was blandly informed Paul was feeling tired and came to Liverpool for a couple of days change.

Well, that's the official explanation. Personally, I shouldn't have thought the air of the Merseyside city was so terribly invigorating. But the hospitality definitely was. In any event, perhaps he was stimulated by the resultant defence of trailers, and, so far from them being out, I find them more in than ever, because the rumour goes that in future those companies who were making their own—namely, Metro, Paramount and Warner's—may in future do them through National Screen—so probably the journey was invigorating? It would appear so!"

## Film Societies

At the Academy Cinema in Oxford Street, the London Scientific Film Society gave film shows in the winter of 1938 and again in 1939. The average audience was 300-400 people, and two typical films shown were *Rain* and *its Causes* and *How the Telephone Works*. Both are good examples of film being used to bring alive real facts about the world to the layman. They showed also that these scientific facts are not a jumble of abstruse theories and complicated formulae; on the contrary, the scientific film presents the inexplicable and the complex as a lucid pattern of thought. This is an important aspect of the social relations of science. Why?

Science has built up its structure, and so achieved its power of moulding our environment to suit our needs, very largely by *abstracting* itself from everyday human affairs. But the next step—implementing the promise of that power—involves stepping off the pedestal of abstraction into the commonplaces of men's day-to-day lives. Every time somebody, by talks, books, radio or films, makes the complex appear lucid—by showing how the radio valve works, how chromosomes affect our lives, how a bomb explodes—he does something which gives men a greater faith in objective, accurate thinking. That

is why lucid exposition is important in developing the social relations of science. The good scientific film can achieve this lucidity more easily and strikingly than can any other method.

A moving picture is seen on the cinema screen. The words of a commentary or dialogue inform about it. They develop the idea and make an abstract generalisation—a thing which does not come happily to the ordinary man, for it nearly always means removing the familiar emotional values. But the film steps in with the visual interpretation of the abstraction—a diagram, a chart, a photomicrograph—and the difficult thought process is helped on. Then the abstraction can be succeeded by a familiar object which may be relevant to it—a man, a house, a child, a doctor. The impersonal, and thus unlikeable quality, of the abstraction is torn away. Its likeable, rational quality remains. The idea that objective thinking must be cold and inhuman loses just a little more ground as the film winds into the take up box.

The Hayes Scientific Film Society was formed during March following a successful series of film shows run by the local Branch of the Association of Scientific Workers. There is a very encouraging critical interest in scientific films in the district, but as yet it only comes from the technical workers. One of the aims of this Society is to endeavour, through the Shop Stewards and Trades Council, to draw in work-people from the various factories; to get them to say what sort of shows they want, criticise them when they see them, and hence say what films they think should be made. It is realised, for example, that although radio is one of the major local industries, there is scarcely a worthwhile film on the subject, either of general interest or suitable for the training of assistants. It is felt that an organisation such as this Society should not be just a passive body, but that it should be a channel for constructive thinking and doing about scientific films.



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

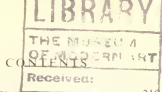
DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

NO. 5, 1943



FILM PROGRESS IN THE SERVICE	210	212, 213
NOTES OF THE MONTH		212, 213
HOLLYWOOD VS. BRITAIN		214
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS		215, 216, 220
MOVIES ARE IMPORTANT TO RUSSIA		217
BOOK REVIEWS		218
FILM OF THE MONTH		219

VOL 4 NO. 5

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

SIXPENCE

## WHAT WE ARE WORKING FOR

JOURNALISTS, teachers, statesmen, and film makers, assorted purveyors of assorted ideas, are most of their time experiencing great difficulty in seeing the wood of ultimate purpose for the trees of present expediency. They are so caught up in their war-time chores that the long-term issues and the wider tasks tend to be forgotten. It is good sometimes to take stock of the ends to which we are working.

We have the privilege today of living in the most exciting period of the world's history. Man at last has the power of moulding the place he inhabits to suit his needs. It is also true that he has the power of killing off his own race more quickly than unaided nature can ever do. This present period is exciting because, even as we use our power to the end of mutual extermination, we are doing more, on balance, to shape the world as we want it.

Due to the impetus of technical developments, man is out of joint with his times. He doesn't know how to get enough food when there is an economic slump; he doesn't know how to keep well when he works in the dusty air of factories and mines; he doesn't know how to be good friends with formerly distant foreigners who are now his neighbours; he doesn't know how to live his family life now that the needs of the community are of a wholly different order from what they were half a century ago. Man has eaten some of the tree of knowledge and by no power whatever can he undo that act. True, it has given him the power to see that he cannot alter the past. Now he needs to appreciate that he *can* mould the future.

The very technical resources, which have put him at cross purposes with the world, also give man the means to fashion himself to meet these changes, and to have an adventurous time turning them to good account.

The trouble is that the world has grown ten times smaller—or, if you like, time goes ten times more quickly—and that most people just don't know it. It is as if a man who has lived for many years in a spacious town house with high ceilings and wide stairs, suddenly finds himself in a country cottage. At first he bumps his head on the ceilings and keeps tripping up the stairs. He has to accept the fact that he is in a new house, and then to make himself at home in it. The sooner he does that, the sooner he will be able to spend time getting to know the fascinating new life of the countryside and the quality of the people who live in it.

The answer to his problem is that he should have more knowledge of himself and of his new world. The first conquest of man's surroundings demanded that he should not too closely work out just what was his precarious hold on life. He would have been appalled at the truth. Shielded by ignorance he could, helped by those who served as unquestioning slaves, build up his modern tools of science and industry, and following on them, a wealth of new conceptions.

Now that they exist it is vital that *all* men should understand these new tools and ideas so as to use them wisely—for no one can avoid coming into contact with them every day of his life.

One example of the new tools is radio. As we know, it was used by the Nazis to cut off their people from relations with other peoples. The German people did not know the potentialities of the new instrument; they did not know that radio sets which receive only stations broadcasting one kind of idea, and no other, are a mighty force for evil.

But another quality of this new world is that fresh groups form themselves in the community; one such group is the National Fire Service. (Its existence is related to the invention of the incendiary bomb.) Here was the opportunity for men and women to meet, talk and grow to know the rich world of one another's experiences. The fullness of this opportunity could only be realised by a conscious effort—they formed discussion groups, the germ of a new political idea.

These are bare indications of the possibilities. But they stand on chance of being realised in any healthy form unless people know that they exist—as possibilities. This interpretation of man to himself and his new world is the vital factor upon which his social progress and, indeed, his continued survival depends. It is upon this fact only, and not upon any aesthetic virtue in the "creative interpretation of reality" that the great goal for Documentary is based.

Every documentary film made must be directed to this end—of showing reality so that people can understand it; and showing it excitingly so that they want to know and *feel* more of it.

That reality may be anything from the biological processes by which their baby grows into a man or woman, to the opportunities that baby will have for a full and happy life in later manhood; from the way a wireless set works, to the way that a wireless set can be used to plunge the world into war or bring about a new era of vivid healthy living. The real world is made up of people and things, and ideas about people and things. All these can be made exciting and attractive without building fantasies to cloak their true nature.

The way in which we make the real world seem exciting does not matter—it may be by slick montage, clever stories, lots of colour, pretty people, in films, radio, or television, in music or painting, in ballet or sculpture.

But whatever method is used it must be to the point that men and women welcome the idea of living in a real world. It is only by knowing it truly and honestly, that they can work and play in it happily. With knowledge of that real world they can have such a full life that all of man's heavens, from Mount Olympus to Hollywood, Calif., will seem as less than the dreary emptiness of a ballroom in the morning sunlight. People will see that the world itself is rich enough and noble enough to provide for all their needs.



# FILM PROGRESS IN THE SERVICES

THE British Armed Forces have become very important makers and users of films, though, in each of the three Services, film activities began in a small way. This survey is concerned primarily with the position today, and likely future developments, but an idea of the original status of films in the British Army, for example, is represented by the predicament of its only two cameramen in 1940—Harry Rignold and Walter Tennyson D'Eyncourt. They were in France when that country was over-run, and accordingly were *sent home*. A few good pictures of blitz scenes in French towns were turned in, but the military history of Dunkirk had to be left to a single newsreel operator working with the Navy.

## Army Films

From these beginnings has grown the organisation of today, centralised in P.R.2—Public Relations 2. The two cameramen have grown, at the moment of writing, to some eighty together with eight directors, distributed on various fronts. These units send in their material to P.R.2, who sort, process, censor and classify it into library. From P.R.2 the material goes to its various users, of which the chief is the Army Film Unit at Pinewood.

Some of the details of this organisation give an encouraging picture of a public relations policy attuned to its responsibilities and growing on sound lines. There is an Army Film and Photographic Service (A.F.P.S.) whose job it is to shoot material on the scene of action, be it battlefield or rear base. They get still pictures (using still cameras) as well as film-scenes which are, of course, their prime concern. Attached to the Eighth Army and covering the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, Iran, etc.) is No. 1 Unit of the A.F.P.S., consisting of four directors and forty cameramen. This, under David MacDonald, is the largest unit of the kind. Laboratories in Cairo process its rushes which can therefore be viewed by the technicians on the spot. No. 2 unit, with the First Army in Tunisia, has its rushes despatched by air for processing at Pinewood, whence it gets detailed reports by cable. This section is under Geoffrey Keating and consists of three directors and thirty cameramen.

Each section is a self-contained unit operating under control of the Assistant Director of Public Relations at Army H.Q. Thus each unit on the field works in close liaison with, but not under the direction of the local H.Q. of the area in which it is operating. It is self-supporting in all matters, including transport—the latter is obviously a pre-requisite of real independence of action. The remaining two sections are much smaller—No. 3, attached to Home Forces, consists of three cameramen only, while No. 4, attached to an Airborne Division, has four cameramen and one director, Paul Fletcher. Both these sections retain their independent status, that is, they are answerable to P.R.2, but naturally work in close liaison with G.H.Q. Home Forces or the Divisional O.C. The Army Film and Photographic Service has, besides these four units, two cameramen who operate independently, one at Gibraltar and the other at Malta. The whole organisation has to be a fluid one—adaptable to meet any possible changes in the war situation.

The cameramen of the A.F.P.S. are trained soldiers of high medical category with the rank of sergeant. They have been through the full battle-training course as well as the special training needed to make a cameraman, though naturally a number of them were cameramen in civilian life. One-third of the personnel of No. 1 unit, in fact, had such previous professional experience, but No. 2 unit is made up wholly of men new to camera work as a profession.

These men are to be thought of as soldiers using a specialised weapon—the cine camera, or in some cases the still camera. They are not simply cameramen who have been put in uniform. As a result, the Army film man is part of the social group whose activities he records—he knows it and feels it; and he needs to be tough if he

is to match up to the mobility and staying power of the trained soldier. This invokes a basic principle of documentary—that the technician must be in touch with the people he puts on the screen. The full value of this principle can only be brought out if the film technicians make use of it. They must not be content with showing the bare military implications of what the soldier does; the soldier's life as a man—or woman—is very relevant to the Army story.

The Director of Public Relations is Major-General Lord Burnham; he has the qualification of being a soldier by profession, and a knowledge of the Press, derived from his previous association with the *Daily Telegraph*. The department P.R.2 under Ronald Tritton is responsible for film propaganda. Contact is kept with the Ministry of Information, and there are fortnightly meetings at the War Office with its Film Officer, Mr. Jack Beddington, where questions common to both organisations are discussed.

One interesting feature of broader developments is that two film directors have been loaned to the Indian Government at the request of the latter. It was felt that Army activities in India required better cover than they were getting, as indeed is evident enough from their absence on British screens. Here appears to be a much needed opportunity for developing a wider awareness in this country of one side of the Indian scene. But that is up to the Indian Government, and P.R.2 is more concerned with affairs here.

As has been mentioned, one of the users of the film material administered by P.R.2 is the Army Film Unit at Pinewood, under Hugh Stewart. (Here nearly all technicians are experienced professionals.) Besides film production and the issue of reports to the A.F.P.S. they run a school at which British, American, Canadian, Polish, Dutch and Norwegian soldiers are trained as cameramen—at present some 45 men are being so trained. From the pool thus formed cameramen are sent, when fully trained as described earlier, to feed units posted away.

## Feature Films

Directors return to Pinewood to finish their films. Up till a little while ago the Army Film Unit concentrated on short films which could do little more than portray various sides of Army life—not to imply that this was unimportant. For with our military activities developing hopefully, let us say, rather than inspiringly, the simple informational film had its value. Now that the war is developing as a series of major campaigns, the policy of P.R.2 is to make feature length films to tell the campaign story. *Desert Victory* was the first of these, and is soon to be followed by the story of Tunisia.

At Pinewood, too, the R.A.F. and Crown Film Units have their headquarters, and the studio can thus form a useful common meeting ground. There is also contact here with some American Units. Mutual contact with them, not to mention other Allied Service organisations, is felt to be very desirable. The American forces show a wide-awake appreciation of the importance of films; but this appears to be correlated with a many-sided organisation, with which mutual dealings would be easier, were there some centre for direct approaches.

Apart from Pinewood, other users are the M.O.I. who need library material for a large number of their films. They get it, of course, without charge. Also commercial producers sometimes make use of it, paying at the usual commercial rate.

Important users are the newsreel companies, who get material free. This arrangement is justified in that the Army obtains through the newsreels a good deal of valuable screen time. (An example of the speed of working required to meet newsreel conditions is the 51-hour job on Churchill's North African visit. The undeveloped rushes arrived at 11 a.m. They were processed and screened for the

## Film Progress in the Services (continued)

Censor, to whose requirements the negative had to be cut; five censored lavenders were wanted, one for each of the five newsreel companies; and they saw the censored positive at 4.20 p.m.)

To all censor's screenings of rush material come representatives of A.K.S.—the Army Kinematography Services. They are another of the group of users served by P.R.2, and quite separate from it; they handle all the Army training films.

From information derived from its Policy and Planning branch (A.K.1) it is possible to give an idea of the trend of development of A.K.S.

As regards the scope of work hitherto undertaken it can be said that in the main all of the Primary Training subjects have been covered by films. (Primary Training is that basic training given to every recruit during his first six weeks of service in the Army. It includes such things as ordinary foot drill, gas drill, the use of such weapons as rifle, bayonet, grenade, Lewis gun, and so on.) The type of film made until a few months ago has been the straightforward instructional, the production of these being handled by 12-15 commercial companies.

A.K.2(b) is the department of A.K.S. which deals with production by commercial companies. These instructional were wanted quickly and companies which had experience in producing quota shorts were given the job of producing many of them. Without seeing a representative selection of the films it is of course impossible to do more than guess how effective such qualifications are for this kind of work. In their practical application these films brought out certain principles. The soldier is interested in the real matter of this kind of film—he wants to learn his job. It used to be common practice to put into instructional films humorous asides, attuned as it was thought to the soldier's outlook. In fact the soldier found these unwelcome intrusions—particularly after he had seen them a few times. The practice has been given up, and in the same way other principles, long accepted by people who know documentary, have been validated.

### Training Films

The trend now is towards films whose approach to training is tactical—that is to say, they show the use of a given weapon, or special procedure, not as something on its own, but in tactical relations with other activities. It is clear that the demands of invasion landings, for example, are bound to include a very full appreciation of the inter-relations between groups. One may imagine for a moment the intricacies of landing a mere fraction of the Sicilian invasion force—say a thousand men. Ammunition, weapons, transport vehicles, telephone and radio sets, food and medical supplies, the right number of the right specialists—the provision and administration of all these has to be linked with Naval and Air Force spheres of activity to make one coherent plan of attack. Then the fighting could start. The unique role, in preparation for this work, which can be filled by well-made films, demands full recognition of their worth.

The problem of security came to the fore with this new type of film, whose production obviously entailed the film technicians being in close touch with military developments. Fox Studios at Wembley were taken over, and A.K.3—the department of A.K.S. concerned with the Army's own direct production—installed there. Thorold Dickinson, who made *Next of Kin* when he was at Ealing, and Carol Reed were in this department. While he was there—both he and Dickinson have since left—Carol Reed made a film, *The New Lot*. Its purpose was to show how all types of men, who might at first sight seem unlikely to fit well into Army life, can in fact settle down far more happily than they thought they would. It can do much to counter the "browning off" which may well arise before a man has been trained up in the job found for him by the Army Selection procedure. A film has also been made for the A.T.S., to show the different kinds of work available to them. Such films are made in close consultation with Army psychiatrists. This is an ex-

ample of how the Army needs to have its own special problems of morale smoothed out by films—we shall see a similar thing later in the R.A.F.—but in many cases these films can be of value to civilian audiences as well. The success of *Next of Kin* will be remembered, but until *The New Lot* has been viewed one cannot judge whether it has equal merit.

The branching out of the training film into the "morale" film is linked with difficult but vital problems. The outlook of troops a long way from home, of troops who may later be living in now enemy-occupied territory, and their approach later to questions of demobilisation, needs to be informed by good sense which films can do much to augment. It is, of course, essential that all such films be absolutely faithful to the character and outlook of the people they portray.

The more direct training films of the new tactical type are now the main occupation of A.K.2(a). At Wembley there are three to four military film units—the production organisation necessarily has to be fluid. The producer—whose position is at present unfilled—has the rank of Major. (It took a little time incidentally to sort out what rank the various technicians were to have; films make their own peculiar demands upon any rigid organisation.) These military units cover exercises and, at Infantry Schools, new tactics and drills directly these have been laid down. Thus they can bring on to the screen every new set of procedure—or "drill"—as it appears. It is appreciated now that only the best instructors should be consulted on training film production; experience makes them more film minded, with increased efficiency resulting.

Training films are made of an average running time of 20 minutes, to fit training periods of 40 minutes. The rate of film production is given as approximately 100 a year.

Films can also be used to bring to the screen new developments which may arise in distant theatres of war. Two cameramen are travelling with a special commission of inquiry which is investigating such matters in certain areas of the Far East.

It is interesting that films can bring new "drills" to the soldier before pamphlets can. It takes about two months to get a film into general circulation, whereas to train instructors, to provide pamphlets and training equipment takes a month longer. Offset against this is the difficulty of keeping films up to date. Since very few "drills" remain set for long, with the Army's tendency to ever-increasing elasticity of organisation, this seems to demand a remedy. The difficulty of solution is not to be glossed over but the same problem on a smaller scale has often been the worry of non-theatrical distributors who have had to handle different versions of films, or films with different sets of titles. It should be possible to devise an organisation which keeps a close check on distribution of copies, and withdraws outdated films for amendment when necessary.

The distribution and exhibition of films is run by A.K.4. They have got over the early trouble, common to all the services, of lack of equipment. Now there are 150 mobile projectors in addition to those installed at every training establishment, most of which are 35 mm. machines. Together, with A.K.5, who get the recreational films and give entertainment shows for the Directorate of Army Welfare and Education, they give 15,000 shows a week. Projectionists—many of whom are A.T.S. girls—are trained at Wembley.

### Naval Films

In the Admiralty, as a whole, we see a rather different approach to the film. It is used solely in relation to training. All propaganda and Admiralty public relations films are produced by the M.O.I., or by newsreel companies whose cameramen operate by special arrangement on H.M. ships. The production of the training film is in the hands of the Training and Staff Duties Division of the Naval staff. The Director of this Division is Captain Oram; in his hands is the co-ordination of the work of the Division, and its integration with the Admiralty needs. In charge of the Film Section is Commander John Hunt.

As all the film production energies of the Admiralty are thus  
(continued overleaf)

## Film Progress in the Services (continued)

concentrated on training, one sees in the Division a more intense concentration in this field than appears elsewhere.

In general, these training films are made by outside commercial companies, but, on occasion they are made by the Royal Naval Film Section at Plymouth. This is the Admiralty's own training-film production unit, which supplements production carried on by the trade. Little information is available about its activities except that its personnel consists of a total of 30-40 people. It has grown in size, and the organisation from time to time has been adapted to meet changing demands.

The film is considered as part of a procedure designed to impart, in the shortest possible time, the information a man requires to learn his job. Other training techniques must also be used with a full understanding of their capabilities and limitations. The film is one; the film strip,\* blackboard, and demonstration on equipment, are others.

### Film and film strips

So that all these devices shall be used to best advantage, the functions and necessary qualities of the film and film strip are described in two documents—"Notes on the Design and Construction of Instructional Films"—issued by the Director of Training and Staff Duties. They are both outstandingly good compilations, and it is reassuring to know that they have been circulated to the other Services, to Government Departments and other interested organisations. They are "issued as a guide for those concerned in preparing and producing these valuable contributions to efficient training. They are based upon present knowledge, which is still in a theoretical stage: they should not therefore be read in a rigid sense but rather as a formulation of current opinion and, as such, liable to extension or revision as experience dictates." Part I is concerned with the film itself; an introduction says: "As a first and cardinal principle it must be recognised that the purpose of an Instructional film is to teach and, if it is to present a clear picture, it must be shorn of all extraneous material that is not essential to the subject. There is a tendency to blur the instructional value of films by building the subject round a story. The argument put forward to justify this practice hinges upon a plausible theory that men under training need a titivation of interest. It is, however, entirely wrong to attract attention to a manufactured story which purports to provide human interest if, in doing so, attention is distracted from the subject that is being taught. Mental alertness must be aroused by interest in the subject and it should be the main purpose of the designer of an Instructional film to see that the subject is made interesting." It is a pity that this sound sense had not earlier permeated the organisations concerned with Service training films.

Part II deals with the 'still synopsis', a film strip which summarises a film in a number of still pictures with sub-titles. "The primary purpose of a 'still synopsis' is to recapture the salient features of instruction and rivet them on the memory. The criterion of its work is the amount of 'sticking power' it gives to the scraps of information that it imparts" (—from the same document). Thus each still has to be carefully selected so that it will bring back to mind a key piece of information. This can act as a reminder of a sequence of ideas which depended on and arose from that piece of information in the original film.

The film strip is also—but less frequently—used as an entity in itself—i.e., not as a synopsis of a film but as an "Instructional still". It is, of course, fully understood that the film strip (used in either of the above ways) is definitely not a substitute for a film: it is made in a different way, from a different point of view, for a different, but important purpose. For example it cannot show essential movements

in an operation, nor can it effectively give that integration of one part of a process with the whole, so necessary with complex procedures. The film can do both. On the other hand, with the film strip, a class can take notes during its showing; and it can be used effectively for revision purposes. The film cannot be so used. The two devices are complementary. Nearly every film used has its film synopsis, and those lacking one will soon have it.

It is impossible to give exact figures, but roughly, the number of British made films in use is about 350, with something like 50 films in production. There are some 400 British made film strips and film synopses in use. A large number of American films are used too—about 1,100 film strips and film synopses, and rather fewer films. It must be remembered that these figures are very fluid, for films go out of circulation and fresh productions are continually being added

(Continued on page 213)

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

WE HOPE that the Films Division of the M.O.I. is checking up the extent to which distributors are honouring their undertaking to show the new monthly 15-minute films. Some people believe that the change over from weekly 5-minuters to the monthly series was a retrogressive step into which the Films Division was tricked by Wardour Street at its wildest. Regular cinema-goers in London's West End report that to see a M.O.I. film is an extremely rare experience. During the first week of release of a recent issue of the "Into Battle" series, the programme particulars of two of the biggest London cinemas showed that in one case the M.O.I. film was shown only at 11.40 a.m. and the other cinema was not showing it at all, but nevertheless had found room to include in its programme a recruiting film for the U.S. Air Training Corps. The inclusion of this film in the programme seemed to demonstrate that there was no question of giving preference to a film with box-office appeal, for it proved on viewing to be unbelievably dull and completely without interest in this country. The cynical observer may be forgiven for frequently feeling that the war effort of the leaders of the exhibiting and distributing sides of the British film industry is more apparent in their speeches than on their screens. Yet if these films are not being widely shown, it is the Ministry of Information which must take principal blame. Ministry officials are much too timid in their dealings with the black sheep of an industry which on the whole is keen to pull its weight.

### Comings and Goings

J. D. DAVIDSON has joined the Films Division of the M.O.I. Davidson is already proving as practical and tireless in his organisation of M.O.I. production as he was in the days when he was laying the foundation of Documentary's technical methods with the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit. Basil Wright has left for a six months' visit to Ottawa where he will assist John Grierson in the development of ambitious plans on behalf of the Canadian Government. Geoffrey Bell (director of *Transfer of Power*, *Fire Guard*, *Control Room*, and Secretary of the London Scientific Film Society) has joined the Board of D.N.L. Increased activity in the field of Documentary generally and the movements of key personnel are making difficult the regular production of D.N.L. (for everyone concerned very much of a spare-time job). We shall continue, however, to publish as frequently as possible and we hope that our readers will sympathise with us in our difficulties.

### You Have Been Warned

*Airforce*, Howard Hawks' large scale feature film for Warner Brothers, did not quite get the press it deserved in this country, and few critics noted the significance of its shape and method of treatment, both of which stemmed more from the documentary stable than any Hollywood script or show copy has done since the *Grapes of Wrath*. *Airforce* is not in the same class as the Stein epic, but it is

\* The "film strip" is a strip of cine film, a few feet long, which carries on its standard cine frames a series of stills and titles. They are thrown on to a screen by means of a simple, specially designed projector in the same way as lantern slides would be. Film strip projection has a great advantage over the magic lantern in that the apparatus is far lighter and more compact, and the stills cannot be projected in any other than the correct order.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH (Cont.)

significant in the brutal casualness of Dudley Nichol's story, which, by and large, keeps very much to the hard realities attendant on flying a bomber across the Pacific Islands immediately after Pearl Harbour. "Love interest" and "story value" have both been jettisoned, with the result that there is a mounting instead of a diminishing sense of realism. This is thrown all the more into relief by the final reel, apparently added by a tycoon with cold feet, in which a batch of Flying Fortresses sink every ship in the Japanese Navy and Merchant Fleet twice over and are patted on the back by Hollywood, Abraham Lincoln, Elmer Davis and Uncle Tom Okum and all. But despite this, *Airforce* may well be seen as an encouraging portent of things to come.

### Films in the Services

THE ARTICLE on Film Progress in the Services which we publish in this issue is the first attempt at a complete and authoritative statement on this subject. It is based on official statements made to our representative and we do not claim it to be exhaustive. There is, for example, no reference to the film activities of the Army Educa-

tion Services which we know to be most enlightened and forward-looking. We hope in the future to carry our present survey one stage further by viewing a representative collection of the Services films which are being made and by investigating the conditions under which they are being shown. In the meantime our readers in the Services will know best what divergencies exist between theory and practice.

### Science and the Films

THE FORMATION of the English Scientific Film Association, announced on another page, is a step forward in the interpretation of science to the public. An organisation such as this can do much to give a new meaning to science, showing it as something of interest and value to the ordinary man, rather than the cult of veiled and often harmful mysteries which he is often led to suppose constitutes the meaning of "science". The recent increase in the number of Scientific Film Societies has shown that a focus of interest exists which is capable of great expansion if given organised expression. We wish the English Scientific Film Association every success in its aim to develop this healthy interest in the world of real things.

## FILM PROGRESS IN THE SERVICES (Cont.)

It is most satisfactory to note that experiments have been carried out to find something of the relative value of these visual aids. Details are not available for publication until full confirmation of the validity of method is forthcoming, from its application in normal use. One can say, however, that the experiments were carried out in collaboration with Admiralty psychologists, and that 700 pupils were used.

As regards proposals for the immediate future the Division plans to get every Naval Training syllabus covered by films and film synopses.

### Air Force Films

Film production in the Royal Air Force lays relatively less emphasis on the training film than do either of the other two Services, though the pattern of organisation is broadly similar to that of the Army. (The parallel of small beginnings holds good too; R.A.F. film production started simply as an historical record-keeping establishment.) As in the Army, there is a Public Relations branch, this time called P.R.I., which deals with films; in charge, is Wing Commander Twist. Cameramen send in from the battlefields of the Middle East, to Pinewood, their war front rushes. Pinewood distributes the material to its users. These include the newsreels and M.O.I., the R.A.F. Film Production Unit and "T films"—the branch of the Air Ministry Training Directorate concerned with getting films made by outside concerns. One valuable use of film has been in training for aircraft recognition. Particularly when the Americans came over with numbers of new aircraft types, speedy instruction in recognition became pressing.

As we have seen before, the internal "morale" film is linked to the training film, though here some are made by the R.A.F. Film Production Unit, not exclusively, as in the Army, by the Training Department. An example is a film called *Jumps Ahead*, intended to prepare paratroopers for action. The film shows what paratroopers are going to go through in their training, and generally gives an impression of the way of life peculiar to this new activity. The film has

the job of cultivating the paratroopers' outlook. Since they carry out paratroop training, the R.A.F. produced the film.

Another interesting use of the internal "morale" film is the monthly cinemagazine—called "The Gen"—which gives a picture of what different parts of the Air Force are doing. It is valuable for showing at stations posted in outlying parts; personnel are kept in touch with what is going on in the organisation as a whole, and can feel they are part of a group who breathe the same air.

The R.A.F. Film Unit works at Pinewood under the operational direction of P.R.I. (It may be a pointer to the importance attached to films by the R.A.F. that the film work of Public Relations is handled by a department so numbered.) It is found convenient for the catering and other ancillary services at Pinewood to be run by one organisation, so such work is done by R.A.F. personnel, for the Crown and the Army Film Units, as well as for the R.A.F. Unit itself; thus there are at Pinewood appreciably more R.A.F. than Army personnel.

One major occupation of the R.A.F. Film Unit arises from the fact that film records are made of most of the important operations, with the exception of those exclusively involving fighter 'planes. It is interesting to see how the special character of air warfare demands extensive use of film. The highly technical nature of Air Force operations means that results of all kinds—bombing, strafing, air combat—must be scientifically analysed by skilled men. They cannot observe results directly except possibly on rare occasions; and in any case direct observation would give very inadequate data owing to their instantaneous nature. So the cine camera is used to bring back a permanent record which can be studied in full detail. One fact arising from this is that people in responsible positions in the R.A.F. have grown to appreciate the value of film as a war weapon. Another point of interest is that many of these film records, or stills from them, have been released for publication, and by them the general public have been given a striking picture of modern aeronautical developments. (Stills are commonly taken from films; in most

R.A.F. photography it would be difficult to select the best moment for a still shot, and the increased "picture value" of a still, taken from the right moment in a film, easily makes up for loss of quality.)

Because of the value of their time to the community, it is usual for highly placed statesmen to travel, on matters of political significance, by air. As security in these circumstances is also of vital importance, it happens that the R.A.F. cover such news items both for record and news value. This was the case on the occasion of Molotov's visit; because of the need for full secrecy, as well as continuity in treatment, the same unit covered later incidents connected with the visit. This again is an indication of the increasing importance of the air as a new sphere of social movement. The film, from its nature of being essentially an expression of modern life follows closely in the track of developments in the air.

### The General Trend

To summarise. We see, in the Army and the Air Force, that the power of film has become recognised, in a matter of two years, as something unique. The organisations for handling it are still developing, a large number of young men have been trained as film makers.

In the Air Force, the very dynamic nature of the work it does probably has the effect of selecting into that service mainly people whose personality has also a dynamic quality. They take readily to films. The relative lack of emphasis on the training film may arise because the skills needed for flying operations depend so much on bodily and mental agility—things which can only be acquired by doing rather than watching. As regards the use of the film internally the Admiralty appears to be doing work whose importance to the other services, and potentially to the community at large is very considerable. It is to be hoped that the silent tradition will not hamper the eventual spread to the wider educational fields of civilian life, of the knowledge that is being gained due to

(Continued on page 214)



## Films in the Services (cont.)

the special war-time demand for efficient training. The information (as opposed to the opinions) contained in this article has been obtained from the Services themselves and while, broadly speaking, it is possible to vouch for the statements made, there are various matters of degree and detail which would need a fuller investigation for their description in proper perspective.

From all the Service authorities concerned we have received in the preparation of this article very considerable co-operation and facilities. There is no reason to doubt that the information we have obtained accurately represents the intentions of all the Service units dealt with. *D.N.L.* has not infrequently in the past directed criticisms against the activities of various Service film organisations; and while our survey makes it apparent that many of the lunacies which marked the earlier stages of Service film making have been abolished, there may well be scope for considerable improvement as regards certain aspects of the work. In the meantime, it is most satisfactory to learn that the experience of the use of training films in the Army has been sufficiently successful to warrant official consideration being given now to the question of making training films a permanent factor in the Army after the war.

Particularly as regards the receiving end of Service film production, data are naturally not easy to come by. Apart from the praiseworthy Admiralty investigation, about which full information is not yet available, judgment of the effectiveness of the distribution of training and morale films must be reserved. It is here permissible to ask whether all officers concerned are sufficiently conscious that, however excellent the work done on the production side, it can be completely wasted if distribution methods and projection conditions are not equally well organised.

Obviously there are other difficulties which are bound to arise in Service film production and which are not easily solved. We may, for instance, refer to the possible difficulties of dovetailing the personal relationships between film makers with the disciplinary relations of Service personnel. The team work required for the making of a film is not the same as the discipline required for the efficient working of a military unit. Clearly the most obvious anomalies have, except in possibly a few cases, been dealt with; but it may be questioned whether the higher authorities have yet realised the full implications of this problem.

Finally, has inter-Services collaboration yet been developed to the degree which it should? No great emphasis appears to be laid on inter-Services collaboration at present. But this is surely highly necessary in view of the modern techniques of combined operations.

At Pinewood Studios where Services film personnel and the civilians of M.O.I.'s Crown Film Unit are working under one roof, there potentially exists the war's most significant development in factual film-making. But it is still only potential.

# HOLLYWOOD vs. BRITAIN

Reprinted by permission from *The Picturegoer*

WHAT part does Hollywood propose to play in the future of British films?

The query springs from the announcement that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer has "merged" its British subsidiary with the London film interests of Sir Alexander Korda.

The new deal means that M-G-M British, through which will come the necessary financial succour, has space in England's largest and most modern studios. . . . It can draw upon Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer of Hollywood, for stars, directors, writers, producers and technicians which together are acknowledged to be the cream of Hollywood's motion picture talent.

No other British production concern, with or without help from some Hollywood combine, can hope to do better; few can hope to do as well.

I talked with Sir Alexander Korda as he packed his bags.

He acknowledged that "although my job for the present will be to sell Britain to U.S.A. and U.S.A. to Britain", the new merger represents Hollywood's initial step towards post-war rehabilitation of Anglo-American film production.

It doubtless is an astute preliminary to a world-wide alignment with the "New Economy" which we are told is to come after the war.

It reveals, at least, that Hollywood is planning ahead for the day when United Nations influence having usurped all Axis, as distinct from dictatorial influences, motion pictures as a cultural, as well as entertaining factor, will once again girdle the world. . . .

The British Government and the British film industry are pre-occupied with the urgent business of war.

History repeats itself so far, with Hollywood, although part of U.S.A. at war, a haven of comparative peace and prosperity. . . .

It was much the same during the last war, when the slight but flourishing British film industry died in khaki to be called back in spirit by the first British Quota Act of 1927.

Its "materialisation" never has led to the foundation of a British film industry, which in corporate unity and pseudo-competitive co-operation, offers a fair comparison to Hollywood, in terms of a potential film monopoly.

The British Film Producers Association never achieved for British films, what "the Hays Office" achieves for Hollywood. The British Government never has shown any significant grasp of the vital importance of a national film industry, for each and every great nation, Britain included.

Even admitting that the Conservative British Government of 1927, by enacting the "quota law" did for British films, more than Hollywood had ever received, or even requested of Washington, it still is true that, according to its problems and its needs, Hollywood can get, at beck and call, more action from Washington than British films have yet had cause to hope for, from Whitehall. The reason is that Hollywood is organised; is united and has its own trivial political machine ever at work, at home and abroad, to align its commercial and industrial policies with ever-changing world trends.

That is why today, M-G-M leads the rest of the Hollywood combines, in taking up a new and

slightly more strategic position on the playing fields of British films.

Already other foreign film production centres, including Soviet Russia, are being carefully examined by experts in Hollywood's employ, with a view to framing post-war policy.

Sir Alexander Korda tells me he will at once commence production of British films comparable to the most ambitious which he, and M-G-M British, have turned out in the past.

Shows like *Goodbye Mr. Chips*, *A Yank at Oxford*, *The Citadel*, *Four Feathers*, *The Thief of Bagdad* and so on, most of which, unlike many other tip-top British pictures, enjoyed United States release on terms fairly equal to those available to the best of Hollywood's films.

I am not saying that the quite considerable profits they earned in U.S. theatres, returned in any bulk to Great Britain. That is a point upon which native British film production chiefs like Arthur Rank, A. G. Allen, Michael Balcon, and the others may sharpen their wits.

If you like British films, you may feel like telling me that you are getting some jolly good ones; that you expect to keep on getting a "jolly sight" better and so what does it matter who makes them?

Your definition of "a British film" may be "a film made in Britain", or it may be "a film about Britain", or again, "a film produced by British capital and British labour." I don't know.

My definition of "a British film industry" is "a unity of British capital and creative talent, expressed in and through a united and enlightened industry, with the will and capacity to compete on equal terms against all foreign industries in its own line".

That would mean that it would build up its own stars, directors and writers to "international" significance.

It would maintain its own contacts, commercial and creative, in all the overseas countries which represent markets or potential markets for the type of British film which would express—in the way the Hollywood film expresses—something of the great country in which it originated and the characteristics and problems of the people there.

Then and then alone, could we hope, that British films might begin to do for Britain what Hollywood films have, for the past twenty years, been doing for the United States.

I speak now of a "cultural" force much too subtle to be referred to merely as "propaganda", which has made all Britain, America-conscious. . . .

The British film could do the same in U.S.A. and elsewhere. But first it has to get on the American screens. At present it can do so only by consent of American film combines, ruled by Hollywood. It is likely that Hollywood is going to work overtime to build up competition against itself.

Instead we may expect that by good business sense, Hollywood will, if possible, exert a controlling influence on British film production, to the end that such British films as do show in U.S.A. will not "get in the way" of Hollywood's own movies.

There is nothing especially sinister about this. It is big business, that is all.

DOCUMENTARY  
NEWS LETTER

Monthly Sixpence

Vol. 4 No. 5

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Inside Fascist Spain.** March of Time No. 11. 18 mins.

**Subject:** Spain as it is to-day under the Fascist régime.

**Treatment:** March of Time at very nearly its best. "Very nearly" because the commentary lacks the richness and the subtle nuances of the commentaries of such earlier issues as *Inside Nazi Germany* and the famous item on Austria. The pictures are, however, among the most sensational that M.O.T. has ever brought to the screen. Pagès and Ribière, a team responsible for the best of March of Time's pre-war continental films, after escaping from France, succeeded in persuading the Spanish Government to allow them to make the most horrifying exposure of fascism in action that has yet reached the screen. The reason for the full facilities granted them was apparently that Franco officials (loath to allow pictures of depressed life in Spanish towns) were only too anxious to show how they had incarcerated thousands of their Republican enemies in the most nightmarishly modern prisons one has ever seen. Franco is apparently proud that, in his mercy, he has not wiped out every single democrat but has been content to massacre only in hundreds of thousands. The prison interiors, beautifully photographed by Ribière, have all the glaring white claustrophobic impact of Room's *Ghost That Never Returns*. Here we see perpetrated the ultimate horror of fascism. Musicians—ex-members of the State Orchestras under the Republic—are compelled to play fascist airs as members of a prison orchestra formed to entertain teeming Republican prisoners. Imprisoned journalists who worked on democratic papers are compelled to turn out a fascist sheet of "redemption" for the "re-education" of prisoners. The children of imprisoned democrats are shown being trained, almost from the day they can walk, to perform outrageously militaristic evolutions in fantastic comic-opera uniforms. There is scarcely a scene without its priest or nun underlining the full significance of this attack by ancient and modern methods (the inquisition as well as the concentration camp) upon the minds rather than the bodies of men. **Propaganda value:** Inestimable, wherever it is shown.

**The Crown of the Year.** Green Park Productions. **Director:** Ralph Keene. **Assoc. Producer:** Edgar Anstey. **Camera:** Ray Elton and Reg. Wyer. M.O.I. 20 mins. non-T. 15 mins. T.

**Subject:** The Harvest.

**Treatment:** As rich and satisfying as the soil itself is Keene's final film chapter of the four seasons. It is visually beautiful, yet there is no forgetting of toil and planning, nor are practical considerations neglected for the sake of romanticism, that bogey which seems always to be hanging around when the town looks at the country. We see the fruits of the earth being gathered, and implicit in the shooting is the sweat that has gone to their growing. Official planning makes its appearance; but for once on the screen it is concerned with understandable fact; the plan of the farm is looked at, the river land is to be ploughed up to add to the nation's food supply. The film is commented by the farmer and often as we have nattered at the use of the unprofessional commentator, we have to admit that this one is perfect. His voice has a warm country flavour but every word is clear and there is no need of the

usual ear trumpet and glossary. The makers have carefully avoided the bountiful Mother Nature ending by carrying the film on to the toil and preparation for next year's harvest. The music by William Alwyn is as rich and satisfying as the picture.

**Propaganda value:** It is good for any country to have some things to boast about and the progress of British agriculture during this war is one of them. This film does its subject justice. Although we have no agricultural land as spectacular as prairies or steppes, we seem to be leading the world in one aspect of the important job of making much out of little.

**Breathing Space.** **Producer:** Alex Shaw. **Director:** Charles de Lautour. **Camera:** Charles Marlborough. **Editor:** Alan Osbiston. Strand Films. M.O.I. for U.S.S.R. 30 mins.

**Subject:** British entertainment and culture in relation to her war-time effort.

**Treatment:** The manner and the matter of this film both arise from its specific purpose which is to explain one side of our life in Britain to our allies in Russia. The activities depicted include bands in the Parks and Trafalgar Square, Art exhibitions, a National Gallery concert, a dance at a Service aerodrome, a factory canteen concert, and suchlike. The commentary being in Russian, a language of which your reviewer knows exactly five words, one of them indelicate, the full import of the descriptive part of the film (which is obviously a vital part of it) could not be assessed during projection. Subsequent enquiries, however, indicated that the scenes of leisure depicted were not allowed to deceive our Allies into thinking that we were only half at war. The visuals indeed, even without commentary, have been carefully selected to emphasise the urgencies of effort in which our wartime culture and entertainment are framed. De Lautour has directed the film with skill and sensitivity, aided and abetted by first-class camera work and editing. The cogency of the results obtained varies with the subjects treated, which, as already indicated, swing from the sublime to the meticulous: in the former category come the factory concert sequence (the best thing in the film) and an impressive montage of British tanks in action with an Elgar "Pomp and Circumstance" as sound: the latter is represented by an over-long and not over-cheerful canteen-dance at an airfield, and by a semi-imaginative presentation of the genesis and plugging of an Addinsell song-hit.

**Propaganda value:** If the Russians today want a picture of the English not taking their pleasures sadly, this will be very useful. The film goes no further than this, and is presumably designed to fit in with others dealing with other aspects.

**Close Quarters.** **Production:** Crown Film Unit. **Director:** Jack Lee. **Camera:** Jonah Jones. M.O.I. 75 mins.

**Subject:** A routine patrol of a submarine. **Treatment:** A similar film to *Target for Tonight*, *Ferry Pilot* and *Coastal Command*, and the best of the lot, although it is bound to suffer coming as it does two months after *We Dive at Dawn*. The real-life crew are very well directed by Jack Lee and brilliantly photographed by our old chum Jonah Jones. *Close Quarters* in many ways gives a better idea of what it must be like to dive and live under water than does its studio counterpart. There are a number of details that

suddenly make you think of the 100 or 150 feet of water overhead: a mix from a truck out of the port-hole of the supply ship to a close-up of the closed hatch of the conning tower and a pan down to the crew; the aimless walk of the captain in a moment of tension; the conning-tower hatch closing; the crew sleeping in a heap on the floor; the surprising width of the fore-deck; the reactions of the crew to the depth charges.

In *Close Quarters* the torpedoes are fired almost casually—in *We Dive at Dawn* with a great deal of maneuvering and aiming. They both can't be right surely.

**Propaganda Value:** Home and abroad excellent, but was it necessary to have two films on the same subject? The M.O.I. must have known that *We Dive at Dawn* was nearly finished when they commissioned *Close Quarters*.

**We Dive at Dawn.** **Production:** Gaumont British. **Direction:** Anthony Asquith. **Camera:** Jack Cox.

*We Dive at Dawn* is a first class studio documentary, excellent dialogue, casting, photography, sets, acting and direction. Some people complain about the home-life sequences and they are stagey—but they are not particularly well thought out—but they are well intentioned and seriously presented. The trouble may be that very few English actors have the vaguest idea of how anyone below a duchess behaves in normal circumstances, and as script writers suffer from the same fault, working-class home life in films usually ends up as a caricature of the real thing.

All the sequences on the submarine are extremely good, the sailors and officers are well built up as individuals, and the vast amount of technical material which might have been dull, is handled so well that it becomes really exciting.

(continued on page 126)

## SIGHT and SOUND

### SUMMER ISSUE

#### FILMS IN SWEDEN

#### A PLEA for D. W. GRIFFITH CHILDREN'S CINEMA

EIRE

6d.

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

## Documentary Films contd.

The torpedoing of the *Brandenburg* is nearly all technical detail but it is done so well that it becomes easily the best sequence of the whole film and most likely one of the best action sequences ever.

All that remains to be done is to compliment Anthony Asquith both for a good honest film and for his adaptability and to regret that the film didn't finish when the *Sea Tiger* came in sight of the pilot boat.

**The Silent Village.** Crown Film Unit. *Producer-Director:* Humphrey Jennings. *Camera:* H. Fowle. *Editing:* S. MacAllister. M.O.I. 36 mins. *Subject:* What might have happened if a Welsh mining village had been in Czechoslovakia when the Germans went in, or alternatively, what might have happened if Lidice had been a Welsh mining village.

*Treatment:* It is very difficult to say anything against this film without getting involved with its subject. The tragedy of Lidice is world famous, and like many great tragedies it has both horrified and uplifted mankind. But tragedy demands genius for its interpretation. In this film we have sensitivity, good taste and cinematic technique, and occasionally these combine to produce moments of feeling. But that seems scarcely enough.

*Propaganda Value:* It is impossible to imagine why this film was made. The strangely oblique approach robs the film of any direct impact because it has been translated into "It might have been like this" not "It was like this". It has moments of aesthetic and technical interest but this certainly does not seem the time for the tentative and the semi-obscure.

**World of Plenty.** *Production:* Paul Rotha Productions Ltd. *Script:* Eric Knight and Paul Rotha. *Associate Director:* Yvonne Fletcher. *Additional Dialogue:* Miles Malleon. *Music:* William Alwyn. M.O.I. 46 mins.

Surveying from almost stratospheric height the problem of Man and Food, *The World of Plenty* marshals citizen and scientist, fact and forecast in a brilliant display of cinematic technique. Aided by animated diagram, trick optical and Messrs John Orr, Woolton, Easterbrook and Emmett with President Roosevelt and Henry Wallace thrown in for good measure, the film tells us of the past present and future of the world larder.

Man depends on the land and its produce. This fact is easily forgotten in peacetime city living, but in war is grimly remembered. No one toiling on an allotment is likely to overlook the connection between sweat and dinner, and the almost universal nostalgia for steak and onions suggests a lively interest in the food situation. Therefore *World of Plenty* starts with an initial advantage, we go to see it prepared to listen to what it has to say. And it has got a lot to say. It says that before the war people starved in one place while food was destroyed in another, that children went without, while crops rotted in the fields for lack of a market. It tells of a world of waste and inefficiency, a world where food meant money and not life. The story is told by two men—a commentator and a heckler. The first puts across a smooth, urbane story of supply and demand, an official tale in which apples and cows are divorced from their real meaning. The heckler interrupts him, makes him explain and amplify. When they come to a difficult point

(continued on page 220)

## THE WOLF ON HIS DEATH-BED



A Wolf lay at the last gasp, and glanced at the events of his past life. "True, I am a sinner," said he; "but let me still hope, not one of the greatest. I have done harm; but also much good. Once, I remember, a bleating Lamb, which had wandered from the flock, came so near me, that I could easily have throttled it; and yet I did nothing to it. At the same time I listened to the jeers and jibes of a Sheep with the most surprising indifference, although I had no watchful Dogs to fear."

"I can explain all that," interrupted his friend the Fox, who was assisting in preparing him for death. "I have a distinct recollection of all the attendant circumstances. It was precisely the time that you so lamentably choked yourself with the bone, which the kind-hearted Crane afterwards drew out of your throat."

---

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

# Movies are Important to Russia

From New Movies (National Board of Review Magazine)

A DRAMATIC explanation of what movies mean to war-time Russia can be found in two seemingly contradictory news items of recent date. One reported that Soviet actors, directors, etc., are not drafted for military service. The other noted that thirty cameramen lost their lives in filming *One Day at War*, shown in the U.S.A. as a March of Time release.

Yet there is no contradiction. Morale films, fictional features, historical dramas, comedies, must be made behind the lines, and made by the best creative and technical talent available. At the same time, faithful to Dovzhenko's words, "the Soviet camera records the visual aspect of war completely and unflinchingly." Unflinchingly means, among other things, a cameraman loaded down with heavy equipment in the thick of the actual fighting, getting footage, at the cost of his life, footage which will prevent some care-free young critic from complaining: "But we don't see any Germans in the shots of infantry advancing."

Yes, both kinds of movie-making go on apace in Russia. It went on throughout one of the toughest sieges in all history as we may discover in *Siege of Leningrad*, currently being presented to American audiences.

Grim and death-defying kind of documentary photography also went on while Stalingrad rose in triumph from its ashes. On this point, Roman Karmen, one of the Soviet's ace newsreel men, writes:

"When our gunners had pulled their guns into the trenches to fire point-blank at the enemy and it was clear that the Germans at Stalingrad had very few hours left to live, we newsreel photographers worked feverishly to use every moment of waning light of that short winter day. In order to cover all sectors of the front; fifteen of us were distributed among various Red Army units."

"Our cameras caught not only the street fighting but the mass surrender of German officers and men. . . . We filmed the surrender of Field-Marshal von Paulus. We also recorded the surrender of Lieutenant-General von Daniel. The camera caught him walking down the street, followed by a file of luggage-laden officers. Soon the epic of Stalingrad will unfold on the screen. The film will show not only the siege of Stalingrad, but the majestic epilogue, a meeting of soldiers and civilians in the central square of the liberated and heroic city."

## For America

Other documentaries, completed and soon to be available for American release, are *Black Sea Fighters* and *Russians at War*. The first of these was edited, very likely in Tashkent, from footage shot by cameramen assigned to the Black Sea Fleet. It describes the patrol work, landing parties, reconnaissance and offensive and defensive operations of a large naval force, but this is no mere full-length instructional film. It is a tense, emotional portrait of men and ships, alternating the sweet of engine rooms with the ice of wintry seas above decks. During a sequence of battle with Nazi fighting craft one sees a Soviet sailor burst through a doorway with flames streaming from his back—a human firebrand. No effort is made in the film to conceal the damage done by combat and weather, but the final

impression is that nothing will ever drive the Soviet Black Sea Fleet out of its native waters.

On the fictional front, Soviet films continue to show vast variety and vitality. *Diary of a Nazi* is the newest of the out-and-out war dramas to reach the United States. It traces the unsavoury career of a blackshirt S.S. Regiment through Poland, Czechoslovakia and the south of Russia. The remnants of the regiment end up as prisoners of the Red Army.

One of the most unusual items on the production agenda of the Alma-Ata studio in Central Asia is a film to be called *Wait For Me*, based on a poem of the same name, by Konstantin Simonov, war correspondent and playwright, who is doing the script. The author of this tender poetic concept also wrote *A Lad From Our Town*, a historical film dealing with the Civil War hero, Kotovsky.

## Historical Films

This (Kotovsky) film is part of a cycle of historical subjects which the Russian industry feels is excellently calculated to give deeper roots to the fighting patriotism of the average Russian. Eisenstein, a director known to Americans for his *Potemkin*, shown to many audiences here, is putting finishing touches on his *Ivan the Terrible*, concerning himself not so much with the monarch's eccentricities and cruelties, but with his efforts to occidentalise Russia and to import some of the fruits of Renaissance culture such as printing, chemistry, etc.

The Tashkent studio have finished *Sukhe-Bator*, the story of a national hero of the Mongolian People's Republic and in Ashkhabad, on the Iranian border, a studio has completed *How the Steel was Tempered*, adapted from Ostrovsky's novel about the German occupation of the Ukraine in 1918. In Stalinabad, a biographical film is being made about Lermontov, Russia's great nineteenth century poet. It's a short jump, in any studio, from a nineteenth century poet to a twentieth century composer, by virtue whereof Alma-Ata is working on a film called *Leningrad Symphony*, which uses the creation of the Seventh Symphony by Shostakovich as the background of its story. The script is by Alexei Kapler, war correspondent for *Red Star*.

This list could be made longer. Certainly it should include V. I. Pudovkin's production, *The Face of Fascism*, based on short stories by the anti-Nazi German writer, Berthold Brecht; a full-length satire on the Nazi armies entitled *New Adventures of the Good Soldier Schweik*; and a film tentatively titled *Who Is She?* based on the heroic life and death of 17-year-old girl guerrilla, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, who was executed by the Nazis.

## Comedies

The Russians have their comedies, too, but most of them don't find their way to this country because the popular humour of almost any country is too idiomatic for successful exportation. Even these comedies, you may be sure, deal with the war and make Nazis harassed by the Russian winter and Soviet guerrillas, the butt of their humour.

It will be observed that none of the films

touched on herein is completely divorced from the war or from the broader aspects of Russian patriotism. Notice, too, that some of the scenarios are by war correspondents. Apparently the Russians do not feel the need for films of escape, a form of moral therapy recommended in other lands as an excellent lift to the war-time spirit for soldiers and civilians alike. The real key to the shaping of Soviet film fare in war-time may be found in the earnest and inspiring call of Alexander Dovzhenko to the world's film makers:

"Film workers, don't vanish the world of today. Do not 'make it up' out of your imaginations. The world is now very ill. Do not divert your art to trivial, individual matters. The cinema must and can give the answer to the sorest, sharpest contemporary problems. It must honestly help suffering mankind to find its bearings."

## 60 Films a Month on Science and War

(From the Metropolitan Motion Picture Bulletin)

By Peter Furst

(Copyright 1943, by Field Publications, Reprinted by permission of the newspaper P.M.)

Leonid Antonov, special representative of the Russian motion picture industry, and himself a producer and director, now in Hollywood to study American film production and to purchase a number of American-made films, reports that his country plans to produce at least 100 full-length feature films, 10 full-length documentaries and more than 700 short subjects in 1943.

The short subjects, dealing primarily with science and the war subjects, are now being produced at the rate of 60 a month, the Russian producer declared.

Feature films include *Lidice*, the story of the destruction of the Czech village; *Mendel*, story of a Jewish shoemaker who becomes a hero in the eyes of the Soviet people; *Flight over Berlin* and an as yet untitled film based on a story by Mark Twain. One full-length film already produced is *Defence of Stalingrad*, which Antonov said will be released in this country soon.

While cameramen in the Soviet Union today are right up in the front lines with the army—with the result that many have already lost their lives—creative artists are still deferred from direct military service since the Government recognises their immense morale value, according to Antonov.

This particular statement has made Hollywood producers a little jealous, since the manpower problem in U.S. studios is becoming more serious every day. Antonov also told of the tremendous difficulties encountered by the Russian motion picture industry. All the major studios had to be removed, lock, stock, and barrel, to central Asia. Two of the largest studios, Mosfilm and Lenfilm, formerly situated in Moscow and Leningrad, have been transferred to Alma-Ata, beyond the Urals. Newsreel and war front documentaries, however, are still being turned out in the Moscow and Leningrad plants, of the studios, who employ a staff of 160 cameramen in the front line.

Cameramen are being trained in Government schools to take the place of those who lose their lives in the line of duty.



## Book Reviews

THE FILM SENSE, by S. M. Eisenstein. (Faber & Faber. 10s. 6d.)

Eisenstein is one of the six great living film makers (fill in the other five for yourself), and any books by him, let alone his first, which is this, must command (and be read with) attention.

*The Film Sense* is not, in any sense, a practical study. It is an attempt to erect a complete theory of film aesthetic from the original theory of montage (no—not you—Mr. Vorkapitch) which Eisenstein himself invented. To do this he indulges in elaborate *post facto* theorising on sequences in existing films (notably in an analysis of picture and sound from *Alexander Nevski*) and also studies montage (as it appears to him) in the works of various practitioners in other arts—including da Vinci, El Greco, Van Gogh, Bach, Verdi, Rimbaud, Whitman, Gogol and so on.

At this point your reviewer must confess that he finds himself, for the first time in his life, being a thorough low-brow, and would like to add that the thing he enjoyed most in the book occurs in Appendix 3—a record of the shot sequence of the finale of Eisenstein's *Strike*. It reads as follows:

10. The bull's head is fastened with a rope to a bench.

11. One thousand persons rush past the camera.

As an extremely esoteric study of the more curious aspects of film theory, *The Film Sense* is certainly interesting. It is full of exceedingly interesting quotations, and is illustrated by stills and diagrams, including one long one at the back which pulls out.

Photographic Optics by Arthur Cox. Published by The Focal Press. 15s.

This book sets out to explain, in language which can be understood by the layman, the highly technical business of the optics of photographic lenses; and it does that very successfully. Into a little over 300 pages the author has crammed an astonishing amount and variety of information. The man who uses a camera, whether he is a beginner, "advanced" amateur or professional, will find in these pages everything he wants to know about lenses, told in plain English and "without using the much dreaded mathematical arguments"—to quote the dust jacket.

Of course it is impossible to talk about optics and leave out formulae altogether, but these have been kept to a minimum and are of the kind that can be followed without a knowledge of higher mathematics. In addition, a great number of very good diagrams are used to clarify the explanations given in the text.

Starting with elementary definitions of light rays, focal length, depth of focus, focal numbers and so on, the reader is led almost painlessly to more advanced discussion of lens performance, the defects or aberrations found in lenses, and basic lens types. There is a chapter on how to test optical equipment; and a fair amount of space is devoted to infra-red, polarising filters, lens hoods, surface coating, view finders, range finders, lenses for enlarging and projection, film viewers, etc., etc. This very rough outline of the scope of the book is intended to show that compactness has not been achieved by sacrificing thoroughness. This is the ideal book on the subject for the practical worker in photography.

Some Opinions about

# WORLD of PLENTY

CABLE FROM WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA, USA—WORLD OF PLENTY WAS SHOWN TO A FULL HOUSE OF THREE HUNDRED DELEGATES AND PRESSMEN, WAS RECEIVED WITH PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND EXCITED MUCH COMMENT AND ENTHUSIASM AT THE CONFERENCE. USA PRESS RELATIONS OFFICER SAW IT TWICE AND WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED. WE HAVE REQUESTS FOR THE FILM FROM CHINESE, EGYPTIAN, INDIAN AND AMERICAN DELEGATES. THE FILM HAPPENS TO SUMMARISE AND SET FORTH PICTORIALLY SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

Something of a model in this method of posing important problems for serious screen discussion is the study of international nutrition recently produced for the Ministry of Information. The audience are left with the impression that they have been treated to a frank, realistic, and pictorially lucid discussion of a complicated problem. It is important to note, however, that the film would not have served this or any other useful purpose if it had not contrived, while treating a serious subject seriously, to keep expectant and amused the spectator's pleasure-loving eye.—Leading article, *The Times*.

The whole art of advocacy is revealed in this film about food. The art, of course, is to state a short, simple thesis in many words, illustrating it over and over again, until the argument just cannot be missed or forgotten.—*Evening Standard*.

*World of Plenty* is much more than a first-class documentary. It is a political event. It is the first satisfactory use of modern technique to explain to the public one of the great world problems about which common people as well as statesmen and technicians must be compelled to think. *World of Plenty* is a front-page story and a leading article thrown at the heads of cinemagoers, and, whatever its success or failure as entertainment, it will implant a seed.—*New Statesman*.

There is an urgency and bitterness in this film, both in its simple statement of the nightmare contradiction of the pre-war world of starvation and glut and in the inevitable unanswerable conclusion—a world plan for food must be found. Regarded as entertainment, it is as dramatic as any thriller. The selection of material, the editing, the welding of it together by means of an under-running, vivid and pointed conversation between two men, show how completely the producer is the master of his medium.—*News Chronicle*.

It is the function of this film to inspire determination and it represents a major contribution to the United Nations' will to plan.—*The Spectator*. It has tense, dramatic dialogue. It has drama and beauty and ugliness as well as scaring reality.—*Daily Mirror*.

A difficult subject has been handled in such a way as to give it excitement instead of the air of massive deliberation which sometimes broods over the film of fact. *World of Plenty* makes one think of new movements, new ideas, on the factual side.—*Sunday Times*.

## PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Script: Eric Knight and Paul Rotha. Associate Director: Yvonne Fletcher. Music: William Alwyn. Maps and Diagrams: The Isotype Institute. Additional Dialogue: Miles Malleon. Speakers: Eric Knight, E. V. H. Emmett, Robert St. John, Henry Hallatt, Thomas Chalmers. Length 48 minutes.

Distributed by Paramount

PAUL ROTH A PRODUCTIONS LTD.

21, Soho Square, London W.1.

# FILM OF THE MONTH

## *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*

*The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp:*  
Archers Production: Written, Produced and  
Directed by Michael Powell and Emeric  
Pressburger.

It is sometimes said that nowadays mere size, rather than symmetry or grace, is sufficient to impress the majority. On this thesis *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* is certainly a veritable Albert Hall of a film, and impressive in exactly the same terms. Its West End success is undoubted, and presumably its inordinate length has something to do with it; nevertheless, about 70 minutes could easily be removed and the film would be not a whit the worse and probably a good deal better.

But the interesting thing about *Blimp* is not so much the film as its philosophy of life, and the propagandist slant which it puts forward.

Having agreed therefore that it is too long, has the best acting and the worst colour seen for a very long time, and one sequence (the duel) which is real movie, let us pass to a consideration of what factors have contributed to the sublime un-Englishness of the whole affair.

There is no question at all of the sincerity of its makers, Powell and Pressburger. The film is a genuine and often striking attempt to pay tribute to the English.

But the difficulty is that the English people in the film represent what people from the European mainland think they would like them to be; and this is not the same thing as what they are. This is a fact which the Germans are constantly having to discover over again; which makes it all the more extraordinary that Blimp has to be taught to adapt himself to modern life (and death) by a Prussian.

However, it is worth examining in more detail the apparent thought processes which evolved the story.

They appear to be something as follows:  
1. What about making a film about Low's Colonel Blimp?

2. Maybe Blimp isn't really a reactionary and dangerous old soldier. Maybe he has a heart of gold. Maybe there's a logical background which explains his attitude today.

3. All right, let's make a film about his life history and explain him to the ordinary people. Then they'll understand he doesn't mean any harm and will be quite all right after the war and prepared to see their point of view.

4. All right then. For simplicity's sake we'll confine the whole story to the wealthier upper middle class group and reflect the whole thing through the eyes of a German. Not a Nazi, mind you, but a converted Prussian officer.

5. And don't forget some scenes for Deborah Kerr.

6. And be lavish.

In all seriousness, however, there is something highly disturbing in the very sincerity with which our pseudo-British gent is presented. Not only is he not Low's Blimp; he is the very reverse—an apology for the upper-class specialists who misguided this country into the mud of Munich and the disasters of 1939-40.

It is not without significance that the film contains no report of what Blimp was doing and thinking at the time of Manchukuo, Abyssinia, or the Spanish Civil War. (There is a hint that he was Governor of Jamaica—but only in terms of paying an oblique tribute to the Colonial Empire).

No, the real trouble is that the Blimp of this film is the Englishman that a certain type of emigré would like to think exists—stupid, brave, amiable, kind to animals and domestics, and, *au fond* eminently amenable to reason, particularly if put forward by someone of another nationality.

Unfortunately the type does not exist; the nearest approach being not the diarch, who sincerely and openly professes his intentions and doesn't try to be nice about it, but rather the quisling or Munichite who con-

ceals his venom under the facile charm of you-know-who.

The best thing *Blimp* can do is to reassure the reactionaries by making it clearer that they are, as they have themselves so often suspected, the salt of the earth. And it is remarkable, if you think back over the film, that not one single ordinary person, such as you may meet in the street or a bus in England, has anything more than a walking-on part in the entire film. But the people are perhaps not important in comparison with the huge collection of financiers, soldiers, diplomats, judges, etc., who put our Prussian hero on the back in 1919 and promise to put Germany on her feet again. Note, too, that it is the Prussian who reneges on the Nazis, while the financiers, soldiers, diplomats, etc., as we well remember—carried on the good work of backing up Hitler.

As one sees Blimp reunited to his German friend, and being taught by him a few elementary facts about international affairs, one wonders who is the real hero of the film—the German who doesn't like Hitler or the Old Soldier who refuses to die?

And, as a final postscript, can anyone explain the scene in the last war where Blimp proudly announces that we are winning because we play fair, and then leaves a South African officer to torture some German prisoners? Was this put in to make a dramatic contrast with the Boer War opening scenes? Or do the Archers just dislike South Africa?

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders—and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**Kine**matograph  
**WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2



# STRAND FILMS

MAKERS OF DOCUMENTARY

FILMS SINCE 1934



THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR - MANAGING DIRECTOR

1 GOLDEN SQUARE, W.1.

NATIONAL STUDIOS, ELSTREE.

## DOCUMENTARY FILMS *Contd.*

they consult the experts, a British and American farmer, a housewife coping with rationing problems or one of the bevy of celebrities mentioned above. War brought tremendous problems on the food front but it also brought far reaching and revolutionary solutions to them. In Britain it happened swiftly, in America with her vast resources it is happening more slowly, but now every person gets a fair share in the country's food supply. If it can be done in war, it can be done in peace. This is one of the things the film says. To give this message the necessary trumpet blast, Henry Wallace is brought in to say his celebrated piece about the Common Man.\* This provides an excellent finish to what is an important film. But many people will prefer Sir John Orr, who towers above his screen companions.† His words, we admit, have not got the right spellbinding quality for a peroration but, with the implicit suggestion of effort and toil, they suggest that there is work to be done before achievement and that no one enters upon the promised land without fighting.

The Common Man indeed. He who has ever looked in a mirror and said, "I am the Common Man" deserves no World of Plenty.

If there was ever a film of which it might be truly said that everyone should see it, this is the film. Alwyn has written music which matches the film in breadth of vision. We are glad to hear that after its initial successes with specialised audiences it is to be shown publicly.

\* *I say that the century on which we are entering, the century which will come into being after this war, can be and must be the century of the Common Man.*

† *We cannot attain freedom from want until every man, woman and child shall have enough of the right kind of food to enable them to develop their full and inherited capacity for health and well-being.*

## Scientific Films

The English Scientific Film Association was formed on Saturday, May 15th, 1943, at a meeting representative of science and films, convened by the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers. Mr. Arthur Elton, who was in the chair, stated that the new association was to be independent and self-governing. An Interim Planning Committee was appointed to frame the constitution and to propose conditions of membership. Contact has already been made with the equivalent Scottish Association. Among the aims of the English Scientific Film Association are the following:

To promote the national and international use of the Scientific Film in order to achieve the widest possible understanding and appreciation of scientific methods and outlook, especially in relation to social progress;

to collect, collate and distribute information on the Scientific Film;

to publish comprehensive lists of Scientific Films graded according to scientific merit;

to establish relations with Government departments, public bodies and other organisations which are in a position to make, use or circulate scientific films;

to support and consult a representative panel of scientists to advise producers of films of all types in scientific matters, and to maintain close contact with the film industry;

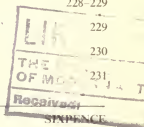
The acting secretary is Mr. M. Michaelis, 51 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London, N.W.3.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

NO. 6, 1943

## CONTENTS

TAKE HEED FOR TOMORROW	221
THE MONEY BEHIND THE FILMS	222-224
NOTES OF THE MONTH	225
NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS	226-227
FILM SOCIETIES	228-229
SHOOTING "WORKERS' WEEKEND"	229
SOUND ON DOCUMENTARIES	230
FILM OF THE MONTH	231



VOL. 4 NO. 6

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

## TAKE HEED FOR TOMORROW

WE are at a stage in the war when it is opportune for documentary film-makers to take stock. Inevitably and rightly they are looking towards the final phase and assessing their rôle. It is clear that the documentary film can and indeed must in the future play a vital part.

Let us examine the achievements of the past. In almost every wartime field the film of fact has made its contribution. With the help of films the fighting services have turned civilians into soldiers with a speed and efficiency surpassing anything previously known. The civilian population has been helped by the film to weld itself into a war-winning force no less essential than the uniformed men in the front line. The Civil Defence services have relied on films to increase the efficiency of firemen, fireguards, rescue workers, first-aid workers. The Ministry of Agriculture has used film to achieve a phenomenal increase in the productivity of our farmlands and our allotments. The health and morale of factory workers have been ministered to by the film; and the meal-break film show has come to be recognised as a permanently desirable adjunct of factory life.

We cannot pretend that the film has everywhere been used with maximum vision or efficiency. In many fields the achievements have been potential rather than real. Let us not pretend either that the tiny British documentary film movement of the pre-war years can claim credit for everything that has grown from its early and often unhonoured efforts. Yet it would be dangerous from motives of modesty or of any other kind to close our eyes to the when and the where and the why of the sowing of the original seed of this wartime achievement. For if we neglect origins we may overlook the persistent neglect of certain original documentary purposes, purposes which have always been in the forefront of documentary policy but have not always been reflected on the screen to a comparable extent with the instructional and expositional types of films listed above.

The source of anxiety is that few of the above films look forward with hope to the future. This is not to say that Britain at war has made no good propaganda films. When it was a question of demonstrating to the world the courage and determination of the British people such films as *Target for Tonight* and *Desert Victory* could scarcely have been bettered. Yet the limitations of this field of propaganda are now clear. Defensive courage in the bombed streets of London and offensive courage on the field of battle are now accepted all over the world as British characteristics and the continued promotion of such themes has therefore ceased to be of primary importance. Nor should we any longer concern ourselves with the production of films extolling the past achievements of democracy and seeking thereby to justify its survival. Democracy has already been adequately justified and will survive. But it will survive only so long as it indicates a path forward. Democracy therefore needs, not

films which show the solution of past problems, but films which postulate new ones. The world is now anxious to know what are the ultimate and civilising aims of the British people.

Let us not exaggerate the change required in documentary emphases. The production of instructional films calculated to increase civil and service efficiency must go on. It is necessary also that we achieve the formulation and co-ordination of plans for the production of post-war educational films on an enormously broad scale. We must bring pressure in every way possible upon all appropriate bodies, both official and unofficial, to see that the instructional use of film—so clearly demonstrated in war—is fully utilised in peace. Nevertheless the fact remains that this great purpose cannot by itself give full scope to the potentialities of the documentary medium.

The main objective of documentary film policy has always been the production of films which would reveal the need for and the means towards progress in the social organisation of the community. If ever there was a case in the past for the relegation of such subjects to a second place of importance, that time has clearly passed. The issue of the fighting war (and indeed its continuance to final victory) may well depend on the clear perception of social goals by the peoples of the United Nations. Documentary must again become militant in the social field, returning to its most clearly creative function. For social criticism is amongst the most creative of all activities.

We need again in our films the crusading spirit of *Workers and Jobs*, *Housing Problems*, *Enough to Eat*, *Children at School*, *Face of Britain* and *The Londoners*. During the war there have, it is true, been a few attempts in the same kind. *The Harvest Shall Come* and *World of Plenty* represent new milestones along the old road. Techniques will change. New audiences will be won by new and more popular documentary styles. There is work to be done in the blending of documentary and traditional feature film techniques towards social ends. *Millions Like Us*, though its message may be obscure, is an example of a production technique with vast potentialities. The need is pressing, the field is vast, the techniques are available. The British democratic choice is between nationalism and internationalism, imperialism and emancipation, vested interest and public interest. It is a choice which the documentary film has been designed to articulate, objectively setting out the facts and leaving its audiences to draw their conclusions.

There has been much talk of the coming need for vocational training films: surely the first vocation for which we must train is active citizenship. Ahead of us lies the greatest opportunity which the documentary film movement has known. It is an opportunity which will not remain open indefinitely.



# THE MONEY BEHIND THE FILMS

By Henry Fullerton

By courtesy of "Tribune"

Some of our readers will have read the following article when it appeared originally in "Tribune". We believe they will agree with us that it is of sufficient importance to warrant reprinting in a film journal. However, we do not necessarily associate ourselves with the conclusions advanced by the author. This version of the article is abridged.

**I**N a report issued in October, 1936, at the peak of the boom, the Film Council wrote:

"In the first ten months of 1936 loans of nearly £13,000,000 were poured into the three great spheres of production, renting and exhibition. Banks, insurance companies, legal investment trusts, even motor manufacturers, are falling over each other in their eagerness to stake a claim. Men and women who have scarcely given a thought to films all their lives are clamouring for posts in the studios, attracted by the rumours of high salaries and speedy promotion. . . . All across the country, queues of people wait outside the new super-cinema, while perhaps two streets away the steel girders of yet another half-finished 2,000-seater rise into the sky."

Let us now take a look at the structure of the British film industry before it emerged from what was certainly the most highly-speculative boom in the history of finance. Broadly speaking, the field was divided between three powerful groupings, each of which exerted varying degrees of influence over all three branches of the industry.

Occupying a key position through their powerful renting organisation were the big American companies—M.G.M., R.K.O., Radio, 20th Century-Fox, Warner and First National, Paramount, Columbia and Universal. Between them, these companies controlled various quota production units, but their exhibition interests were limited to a London pre-release hall, a dozen or so super-halls in key towns and an arrangement with the Union Circuit.

Next came the important Anglo-American alliance—United Artists—which had created a satellite swarm of "quality" production units and acquired a large interest in Oscar Deutsch's rapidly expanding Odeon circuit.

Against these two groups stood two major and independent British "Empires"—Associated British Pictures and Gaumont-British—whose main strength lay in their vertical organisation based on the control of nearly 600 cinemas. Apart from these two companies, the British industry was split into a number of small circuits and privately-owned halls; a variety of independent producers, and a number of minor British renters such as Associated British Film Distributors, Twickenham Film Distributors, British Lion, Equity British, Butcher's Film Service, etc.

This, then, was the position at the end of 1935; and it was a position ripe with possibilities for any man or group of men endowed with the necessary organisational ability, business acumen, and financial resources. As we have seen, lack of funds was the last thing from which the British industry suffered; but it must be realised that the greater part of the industry's financing in this period was of a planless and purely speculative nature. It holds true of any industry that loan-financing leads towards monopolisation only when practised by a restricted number of powerful financial groups acting on a predetermined, long-term plan. Operating quietly and unobtrusively beyond the limelight shared, at that time, by the "Napoleons" of the industry (Mr. John Maxwell of A.B.P., the Ostrer Brothers of Gaumont-British and Mr. Oscar Deutsch) was a Man with a Plan . . . and money . . . and influential "tie-ups."

The plan began to unfold when a certain Mr. C. M. Woolf resigned, in May, 1935, from the board of Gaumont-British. With

the aid of an English finance concern known as General Cinema Finance, Woolf founded General Film Distributors—an important new renting organisation which, within twelve months, was taken over by General Cinema Finance. Now, two of the finance company's directors were also on the board of the American company Universal. The result was a fusion of the renting interests of the American and British companies and the emergence of a new group which was shortly to make itself felt in all three branches of the industry.

In examining the directorate of General Cinema Finance, we find ourselves face to face with some of the most outstanding personalities in the world of English finance-capital.

Lord Portal of Laverstoke, chairman of the great Wiggins, Teape paper combine, and related to the famous Glyn banking family.

The late Lord Luke, chairman of Bovril, and with other interests ranging from gold mines and banks to publishing companies.

Paul Lindenbarg, director of vast financial concerns in Britain, Canada, Austria, Rumania and the Netherlands.

Leslie William Farrow, holder of four chairmanships, three deputy-chairmanships, and 17 directorships in paper and other interests.

And . . . Mr. Joseph Arthur Rank.

## Rank's Background

Rank inherited three things from his millionaire, mill-owner father: a fervent devotion to the Methodist cause, one of the largest fortunes in England, and a Machiavellian prowess in matters of modern financial practice. He inherited another thing—that peculiar quality of irrational austerity to which so many rich men attempt to "convert" a proletariat already forced to practise it by necessity. This trait was most strongly marked in his father who, on one occasion, after examining the plans for a new and handsome five-storey block of offices to be erected in Hull, dismissed a suggestion that lifts should be installed with the comment: "Workers can walk." Yet Joseph Rank is said to have given, in his lifetime, over a million pounds to the cause of Methodism.

Arthur Rank has himself given thousands of ciné projectors to Methodist churches and halls up and down the country, but does not permit himself the luxury of owning a machine for his own private use. This interesting contradiction in his character was very effectively displayed some time ago when a reporter, sent to interview him on the successful conclusion of a particularly smart financial deal, found him taking his usual Sunday school class at the Methodist Church, Reigate, where he lives.

Of his intentions towards the industry, over which he now wields such a large measure of control, it has been suggested (a) that he is primarily interested in the film's possibilities as a medium for the dissemination of religious doctrines; (b) that he is exclusively concerned with the personal power and material rewards derivable from a watertight monopoly over the industry.

As is so often true of such cases, the truth lies somewhere between these two propositions—though exactly where it would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine at this stage.

It is indicative, for example, that in his biggest business deals he has been content to play a waiting game, sometimes for years, moving his players here and there on the chessboard of high finance until he has created a situation where he can finally strike with a minimum of financial outlay to himself and a maximum of financial sacrifice to his competitors. A man of his enormous wealth, inspired—as has been suggested—by the impatient ardour of a religious crusader, would surely have been acting truer to type in going out for quick victories regardless of the immediate cost. On the other hand it can be pointed out that his very first activities in the industry, 15 years ago, were in connection with the production and distribution of a religious film; that his 61 chairmanships and directorships

encompass Methodist Newspapers Ltd., Methodist Publications Ltd., Methodist Times Co., and Religious Films Ltd., and that he has already stopped the production of a number of films which, in his opinion, lacked a sufficient moral basis.

As man, millionaire and Methodist, Rank has remained, and has the quality of continuing to remain, an enigma. As a potential monopolist he is at once an open book and a manual of instruction to anyone who cares to study his operations from 1935 to date. Considerations of space make it impossible for us to deal separately with the variety of small and relatively uninteresting acquisitions which followed the fusion between Universal and General Film Distributors early in 1936. Suffice it to say that as early as the autumn of that year the horizontal structure of the Rank interests loomed large out of the amorphous organism of the industry. The big story of those years lies in the circumstances attending Rank's greatest single triumph—the acquisition of the vast Gaumont-British "empire."

When Woolf resigned the deputy-chairmanship and managing-directorship of Gaumont-British in 1935 to join Rank he left a company which had experienced sufficiently good trading results to pay an average dividend on its £3,000,000 Ordinary capital of 13% per cent for each of the past three years. He also, presumably, brought with him a complete dossier of all the facts and factors which contributed to that great combine's strength—and—more important—the nature of its weaknesses, actual and potential.

#### The Gaumont-British Deal

It began in the summer of 1936 when 20th Century-Fox, in alliance with Loew (the largest shareholder in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) made a spectacular bid for the control of Metropolitan and Bradford Trust, the holding company controlling Gaumont-British. Such a deal, had it gone through, would have produced the most formidable Anglo-American alliance in the industry; but, curiously enough in view of their bargaining power and prestige, the Fox-M.G.M. offer was not immediately accepted by the Ostrer Brothers (who held the key voting shares in Metropolitan and Bradford). The late John Maxwell, then chairman of Associated British Picture and Rank's greatest British rival, swallowed the bait, hook, line and sinker. Alarmed on the one hand by the apparent prospect of a new and all-powerful competitor, and captivated on the other by the vision of creating a solid phalanx of 780 theatres (A.B.P. owned 295; Union Cinemas, acquired later by Maxwell, owned 136, and Gaumont-British owned 345) Maxwell made a lightning bid for the Ostrers' interests.

The Ostrers were most obliging. They sold him 250,000 non-voting shares in Metropolitan & Bradford for £618,125 (the market value of the shares at that time was £209,375) and gave him an option to purchase their 5,100 "A" voting shares—in which reposed the control of Gaumont-British—for £800,000. As soon as the non-voting shares were transferred, 20th Century-Fox, who held the balance of 4,900 Metropolitan & Bradford "A" shares, announced that they would exercise their right to veto the transfer of the Ostrers' "A" shares to Maxwell. As a result, the Ostrer Brothers made a profit of £408,750 and incurred a debt of gratitude to the master-mind behind the plan, while Maxwell paid heavily for a block of strategically valueless shares and saw his hopes of an A.B.P.-Gaumont "empire" fade and then vanish completely.

Meanwhile, the new policy of producing "quality" British films for the world market—initiated by United Artists and taken up in a big way by the Rank combine—had had most unfortunate repercussions inside the hitherto prosperous Gaumont-British "empire". In November, 1936, Mark Ostrer had to inform his shareholders that the company's overdraft with the National Provincial Bank had risen by £482,000 over the previous year—of which amount approximately £247,904 represented indebtedness incurred in the company's efforts to produce and distribute for a world market. The only hope, he declared, of restoring the company's profitability on the production side lay in the abandonment of this policy and the production of cheap films for the home market.

But the company's profitability was not restored. Net earnings in the following year fell from £375,506 to £195,213, and shareholders went without a dividend for the second year in succession. Nor did they receive anything until 1942, when control of the company finally passed to Joseph Arthur Rank. *Throughout this period, Mark Ostrer persistently refused his shareholders' demands for the publication of a consolidated balance-sheet which alone would show the company's real financial position.*

Now for the dénouement.

#### Four-Power Alliance

In October, 1941, Rank bid for, and acquired, the Ostrer Brothers' 5,100 "A" shares in Metropolitan & Bradford. The price paid for the shares was £700,000—or £100,000 less than that offered by John Maxwell. Moreover, 20th Century-Fox made no attempt, this time, to frustrate the deal. Earlier, in January, 1939, Rank had joined the board of another "empire," Odeon Theatres, in which he held a large block of shares. Three years later, almost to the day, Oscar Deutsch died, and Rank became the new Odeon chairman. Against Associated British Pictures was now rallied the might of a mammoth, four-power alliance: Gaumont-British, Odeon Theatres, General Film Distributors and Universal. John Maxwell, who had come so near to the Promised Land, was spared the humiliation of seeing it lorded over by his powerful rival. He died in the summer of 1941. Had he lived, his cup of bitterness must certainly have overflowed on October 13th, 1942, for on that date it was announced that the 250,000 non-voting shares in Metropolitan & Bradford Trust which he had bought, on behalf of his company, for £618,125, had been sold to Rank for £450,000.

It remains now to examine the structure of the British film industry as it exists to-day; to determine to what extent the industry is endangered by Rank's monopolistic activities, and to propound what we believe to be certain fundamental pre-requisites to the healthy development of what, rightly directed, can become one of the nation's most valuable cultural, educational and economic assets.

On the production side, Rank now controls approximately three-quarters of the studio space not taken over by the Government. Indeed, with the exception of the Ealing studios (largely owned by Stephen Courtald of the rayon family), Lady Yule's National Studios at Elstree, and Warner Brothers' studios at Teddington, we have been unable to trace a production unit of any importance over which Rank does not exercise either direct personal control through his English companies or indirect influence through his American associates.

#### American Renters Dominate

On the renting side, the American companies still dominate the field—handling, between them, 70 to 75 per cent of all films shown in this country. It should be noted, however, that Rank distributes the films of three of these companies—Universal, United Artists and 20th Century-Fox. (The managing director of United Artists joined the Odeon board in 1942 and Fox, as we have already seen, is a large shareholder in Metropolitan & Bradford Trust.)

On the exhibition side, Rank's only real competitor is Associated British Picture. Through Gaumont-British he controls approximately 350 cinemas; through Odeon approximately 300, and recent traceable acquisitions bring the grand total up to 700. The majority of these properties are of the "super cinema" type, and it is estimated that these, and the great number of independent cinemas with which Rank has renter-contracts, absorbs about 7,000,000 of the country's cinema-going population. Were Rank to gain control of the A.B.P.'s 500-odd halls, it is certain that he would become the supreme arbiter of the cinema-going public's entertainment and instruction. What are the possibilities of this happening?

Control of A.B.P. was originally vested in John Maxwell's holding of 4,050,000 of the company's 8,000,000 Ordinary shares. On his death the benefit of this holding passed to his widow. Subsequently some 2,000,000 shares were sold to Warner Brothers, but it was stated at the time that control remained in British hands. Now the A.B.P. Ordinary shares are in units of 5s., which means

## The Money Behind Films (cont.)

that Rank, by open market, or covert transactions, has only to lay out, say, £625,000 to acquire control of this £4,000,000 combine over the heads of Mrs. Maxwell and her nominees on the A.B.P. board. It would be interesting to know—(a) what happened to the 300,000 A.B.P. Ordinary shares which were part of the purchase price in the deal between John Maxwell and the Ostrer Brothers (Mark Ostrer is now a joint managing-director of Gaumont-British), and (b) how many A.B.P. shares are at present held by Rank, his nominees and his associates? Perhaps Lord Winterton, of the Odeon board, can be prevailed upon to supply this information in the Commons, of which he is a member.

In view of the war-time shortage of studio space Rank can pick and choose the producers to whom he lets British "stages," and impose on these producers whatever conditions he pleases. He can then distribute the finished products through his own renting organisation and exhibit them in his own cinemas. He has thus already achieved a virtual monopoly over the production, distribution and exhibition of British films. But his stranglehold on the industry does not end there. Up to January, 1943, nearly 90 per cent of the cinemas in the country depended for equipment and servicing facilities on two companies—G.B. Equipments Ltd., and Kalee Ltd. These two concerns have now merged, under Rank's control, into a single organisation known as G.B.-Kalee. Rank also controls two newsreel companies, one of which (Gaumont-British) circulates extensively at home and abroad, and is being used as a mouthpiece for the expression of views and comment of a singularly narrow nationalistic nature.

### Dalton Steps In

But with all this, Rank's greed for power remains unabated. Some months ago, Mr. F. Del Giudice, of Two City Films Ltd., put forward a proposal that his company and the other concerns controlled by Rank should come to an agreement with the major American renters to supply them with all their British quota requirements, and to form "Scenario Institute Ltd." to buy up film rights, screen plays and scenarios. This latest *ballon d'essai* brought matters to a head in the industry. The Association of Ciné-Technicians described the Del Giudice proposal as an attempt to monopolise film production on the one hand and creative talent on the other without offering any safeguards as regards trade union conditions and rights "and greatly reducing both the opportunities and remuneration of technicians". Mr. T. O'Brien, general secretary of the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees, made a public appeal to Parliament to give some attention to what was going on in the industry. "Trustification," he declared, "was expanding so rapidly that unless it was checked all the main control of the entertainment industry would be in the hands of a monopoly."

Under pressure of public opinion Mr. Dalton, President of the Board of Trade, was forced to intervene, and on July 14th it was announced that he had met Mr. Rank and had informed him that the Government could not acquiesce in the creation "of anything like a monopoly at any stage in the film industry". Mr. Dalton's strange conviction that the Rank "empire" is completely devoid of any monopolistic aspect is shown in a letter which he addressed to Rank at that time. In it he refers to Rank's undertaking not to acquire any additional film interests without the prior consent of the President of the Board of Trade, "such consent not to be unreasonably withheld." Now, the very least that can be said of Rank's organisation is that it bears more than a fleeting resemblance to a monopoly. How, then, can the President of the Board of Trade—if he is honestly opposed to "anything like a monopoly"—give his consent to any further absorption by Rank of the very limited number of independent producers? And in what circumstances can his consent ever be "unreasonably withheld"?

But Rank is not worrying unduly. Dalton left him with a loophole wide enough—to get a cinema through. "In cases in which bids

already made are accepted," he said in his letter, "I raise no objection." Since July, Rank has acquired four Paramount "super-halls" in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Birmingham, three London halls from the Metropolitan Cinema Investment Corporation, and the six London and suburban halls owned by Joseph Mears Theatres. It remains to be seen how many more independent companies have been pondering, since July, over the highly attractive spot cash offers which Rank is in the habit of making.

### What Can Government do?

So much for the rise and fulfilment of the Rank "empire". And now, what of the future? By what means can the Government, acting on behalf of the people, break the dangerous stranglehold which monopoly-capitalism exerts on the industry without damaging it in the process?

First and foremost, legislation must be enacted on the pattern of the U.S. anti-trust laws which forbid any ownership link between the three branches of production, distribution and exhibition. These three branches must be disintegrated financially and made completely independent.

To reduce production overheads and ensure an adequacy of funds for the employment of skilled technicians, actors and writers, and for other costs incurred in production, the Government must:

- (a) Requisition all studio space which would be rented on a non-profit basis to British production units.
- (b) Take the highly profitable business of distribution out of the hands of the quasi-parasitical "middleman" and put it in the care of a reconstructed Film Council. Divert all net profits therefrom to a central fund for the subsidising of "quality" production.

The country's 5,000 cinemas should come under the control of a public corporation responsible to Parliament through a Council representative of producer, distributor and trade union interests. Part of the profits from exhibition should be applied to a fund for the renewal, improvement and expansion of cinema properties and the balance to the reduction of entrance charges.

The quota of British films should be fixed, after the war, at a statutory minimum of, say, 30 per cent. This quota should be raised as and when the output and quality of the domestic product justifies such an increase and the present statutory "ceiling" should be abolished.

We do not claim that the implementation of these measures would, automatically and immediately, bring economic prosperity, functional virility and artistic efflorescence to the film industry. There remains a host of minor and incidental problems to be tackled before such a far-reaching step as the complete "de-trustification" of the industry can be taken. But we believe that there are few, if any, of these minor problems which do not admit of easy solution provided the essential measures listed above are fearlessly implemented by a Government drawn from the people rather than from the Directory of Directors.

One final point. Half-hearted measures aimed, for example, at restoring competitive independence in the sphere of production will do more harm than good if they are unaccompanied by legislation, on the lines mentioned above, in the other two spheres. The problem is too big and the industry too volatile to admit of niggling, unco-ordinated action on the model set by Dalton last July. The choice is no longer between private capitalist enterprise and monopoly-capitalist trustification: it is between monopoly ownership and public ownership.

### Appendix!

All references in this article to persons living, dead or unconscious are made in a spirit of cold objectivity. Mr. Rank has a sufficiently good opinion of himself to accept ours with equanimity; Mr. John Maxwell is past caring; the President of the Board of Trade is past hope.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

## Vocational Training Films

THE WAR OFFICE has announced its intention of sponsoring the production of vocational training films which will help to prepare soldiers for post-war employment. This is an admirable project but surely it should not be undertaken by one of the Services in isolation. If Army, Navy and Air Force each make independent plans for placing their personnel after the war, the only result will be hopeless confusion. Moreover, the nature of vocational training should so obviously be determined by probable post-war industrial demands that training film programmes should be drawn up only in association with the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour. The Board of Education, if it is in the future to take a wide and courageous view of its responsibilities, should also concern itself with this matter. The solution would appear to be the setting up of a joint committee on which would be represented, the Services, the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Labour and the Board of Education, the function of this committee being to deal with matters affecting the employment of demobilised servicemen including their vocational training by means of the film.

## Aubrey Flanagan

OUTSIDE Trade circles, the day-to-day work of film trade journalists is little known. If you can stomach the gawdy adverts, you can often read some first-class criticism—hard-boiled but honest. A film trade critic not only reviews current production from an entertainment angle; his job can also mean keeping abreast of the political and commercial moves that stir the industry. He is, as it were, a reliable informant in this underworld of bluff, intrigue and jollity.

Aubrey Flanagan was a trade-paper film-man of high repute. His sudden death is a deep loss, not just to his many friends—and he had more than most men—but to the whole industry. For ten years he was assistant editor to *The Cinema*; from 1938 London Editor of the American *Motion Picture Herald*; from 1926 to 1930 film critic to the *Sunday Worker* under the name of Henry Dobb; and he contributed from time to time to *World Film News* and *Documentary News Letter*.

A sane, level-headed critic of films, sensitive to new ideas and developments yet never forgetting the entertainment objective of most feature production, Aubrey was a born news-getter. Alert to everything worthwhile that happened in the contemporary scene, he never wanted to do anything but write. Boxing was his first love, then variety, and then the movies. From his earliest days, he had an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes and a rich sense of humour. His flood of stories about film-trade personalities was unrivalled, always subtly revealing of character. At the same time, he was without dispute the most reliable mine of information about the industry in Wardour Street. Always a warm believer in documentary, he was quick to spot its weaknesses and never hesitated to state them. He hated the dilettante, the phoney, and the stooge. He could pick out the honest attempt from the tawdry imitation, and did not fail to expose the fake.

Earning his own keep since he left school when his father died, Aubrey never lost touch with the ordinary people. That was his great strength. In the London blitz he frequently went down to the East End and sang among those old Cockney songs which at one time he sang outside pubs to raise his fare home. No trade lunch at the Savoy, no cocktails in the vestibule could deceive his acute estimate of a film, and the people who produced, rented or showed it. Wardour Street knew him as a trade-paper writer; some of us shared his love for the English countryside—its churches and villages, its pubs

and its history. As his oldest friend says: "He was never bored and he was never boring." He was 46 when a heart attack killed him last month. We shall miss him greatly; the Trade has too few such people.

## Harry Rignold

Too often producers and directors in documentary take for fact the part played by photography in their films. The group of cameramen which has grown up in our British documentary world has given much to the prestige with which our films as a whole have been credited. True some directors handle cameras themselves; many films have more than one cameraman; material from stock plays an increasing rôle in production; yet the hard fact sticks, it is the visuals in such films as *Nightmail*, *North Sea* and *Face of Britain* that hang in the mind. The documentary cameraman is often overshadowed by the director or the cutter. He's a technician around the place, turning from one picture to the next, from one director to another. He has not the satisfaction of seeing a film right through from script to married print. His reward is the quality of the rushes; after that, anything may happen to his work. He shoots in the craziest of conditions which any studio-trained cameraman would refuse. He seldom gets newspaper credit. George Noble, Jimmie Rogers, Stanley Rodwell, the late George Pocknall, Jenkins, Frank Goodliffe, Jack Parker, Frank Bundy, Bud Onions, Jonah Jones, Chick Fowle, Teddie Catford, Beadle and Jago—these are some of the patient workers to whom our films owe so much over the past thirteen years.

And going through almost all that decade was Harry Rignold, now killed in action in Italy: A Captain and a Military Cross.

Harry—no one really called him Rignold—was working as an assistant to Freddie Young when, after a bit of bad luck, the studios passed him up, in 1933, and he was taken on by Bruce Woolfe at Welwyn. In the next seven years he worked on many documentaries, at first as an assistant in turn to Jack Parker, George Pocknall and Jimmie Rogers. From Pocknall he learned his knowledge of exterior photography at which he became in the top class. In 1934-35 he went twice round the country with Paul Rotha shooting material for *The Face of Britain* and he was all through the twelve months location work on *Shipyard*. Attached to G.B.I. he also did much work for Mary Field. In 1936 he joined Strand, and shot for Hawes, Alexander, Shaw and Ruby Grierson. He joined Rotha again on *New Worlds for Old*, was right through the six months shooting on *The Times* film, in which his exteriors were brilliant. At the outbreak of war, he was with the G.P.O. Film Unit, worked on *The First Days*, and was the first cameraman to join the then miniature Army Film Unit. The stories of his in France and North Africa were all characteristic of his never-failing good humour, unlimited capacity for hard work and ease with which he got along with people. This latter quality made him a great asset on a unit. Not only did Harry maintain friendly relations within a unit, but he most often guaranteed smooth working in relations without. In the summer of 1941, the A.F.U. loaned him to Rotha Films to photograph *Nieter's Blood Transfusion* film and this probably represents his best lighting work... he was destined to be very good.

But what is the use of saying more? As the offensive sharpens, I suppose it is inevitable that documentary will lose some of its best workers and friends. One of those was Harry. He often thought we were crazy in what we asked him to shoot, but he always shot it well. He never refused to work, he never had an alibi, he was always enthusiastic and deeply camera-conscious. He was the smoothest operator I have ever known. We can ill do without him. He was the kind of person who made the struggle of production a great deal easier by his generous outlook.



# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

**Words and Actions.** Realist Film Unit. For the British Commercial Gas Assoc. *Director:* Max Anderson. *Camera:* A. E. Jeakins. *Commentator:* Colin Wills. *Script:* Frank Sainsbury and John Taylor. *Producer:* E. Anstey.

*Subject:* How democracy can be made to work. *Treatment:* The apparently rough and ready treatment given to film subjects by the Realist Unit has often the effect of unprovoked aggression. If a film can be said to have a chin, Realist films always have theirs stuck out. There is seldom any nonsense about trimmings in the way of smoothing opticals or soothing music, their characters are not chosen with a view to charming nor is their message wrapped up in pink cellophane. That this is by design and not accident would seem to be obvious to anybody who gives more than a moment's thought to their films, and the fact that one is seldom able to forget any of them is a tribute to the success of the method.

In a world where loose meanings are attached to words and slogans and headlines have replaced coherent thought, it is refreshing and stimulating to find a film which sets out to restate the essential meaning of one of the most prostituted words in our language. DEMOCRACY has become a word, for marks, a narcotic for frightened minds. "After all," they probably murmur, as they scan their prosperous activities, "Old So-and-So uses it and he was always on our side—it must be a good word to use." All the old nefarious, anti-social activities flourish and the more they flourish the louder they cry DEMOCRACY.

*Words and Actions* shows how democracy can be made to work, in fact, does work. Not on the hocus focus level of Freedoms and Charters, but on the day-to-day and important level of rent and army pay and hire-purchase agreements and allotments. The film takes several instances—a woman with a husband in the forces who cannot pay her instalments on the furniture, another woman who is not getting an extra allowance from the army—and other problems which make up the texture of people's daily lives. It shows the individual confronted by these problems and putting up with them as part of life's general miseries.

Then he or she talks to other people about the problem, suggestions are made by friends, officials, welfare officers. Then comes the realisation that the individual can do something about it, can take action. This is the crucial point of the film, when the ordinary citizen wakes up and realises that he or she does not have to put up with things, but actually has power, even if it is a very small amount, to act and get things done. No less important is the preliminary lesson that co-operation between people—not vague People with a capital P—but the fellows one knows and meets as one moves about, one's own section of the world is the beginning of successful action.

The handling of the actors in the film is excellent—they look like real people and they behave like real people. The effect of reality is enhanced by the camera work which successfully avoids the Sunny Side Up technique, so popular with many lighting camera men, and yet does not find it necessary to follow the technique of the Hot Spot in the Black Pit or Art is All. It is a great pity that Max Anderson should now be training for a temporary career at sea instead of

following up this film with others and thus wrestling still further with the problem of reality on the screen.

*Propaganda Value:* *Words and Actions* was not made by the M.O.I. but we hear they are giving it their maximum non-theatrical distribution. The only drawback to the film is that some of the incidents which serve as illustration to the main theme are a little dated, not so much because they are not current events, as because they were matters of great importance a year or so ago. However they do not in any way interfere with the job of putting across once more the important message that the world is run by people and that we, the audience, are the people and that what sort of a world we get depends on us.

**Silage.** Realist Film Unit. *Director:* Margaret Thompson. *Camera:* A. E. Jeakins. *M.O.I.* 10 mins. non-T.

*Subject:* Two methods of making silage.

*Treatment:* This film is a straightforward exposition of how to make silage. Like nearly all the films in this series it has the important quality of not only showing you *how* to carry out a process, it also makes you want to go and *do* it immediately. Even if you haven't got any cattle to feed in the winter and are not interested in the shortage of imported cattle cake, silage making, on the screen, looks like an extremely interesting job. This, in spite of the commentator's sinister reference to "many failures". Technically, it is interesting to note the artfully simple way in which the two methods of making silage, one in a silo and the other in a clamp, are interwoven without losing clarity.

*Propaganda Value:* The sheer efficiency of the agricultural series makes them outstanding films—their propaganda value rather depends on how many farmers see them and how many of those farmers are in need of their lessons.

**Surgery in Chest Disease.** *Production:* G. B. Instructional for the British Council. *Director:* A. Reginald Dobson. *Camera:* Frank North. *Diagrams:* H. L. Stringer. *Scenario:* M. Cathcart Borer. *Time:* 40 mins.

*Reviewed by a doctor*

THIS film "is primarily intended for exhibition to overseas medical audiences. . . . It is hoped that the film will serve to give to such audiences an indication of the scope and level of Chest Surgery and collateral services in Britain".

The choice of the most difficult and hazardous operation in chest surgery, of the surgeon, of the anaesthetist and of the hospital, has produced something worth bragging about. Whether the bragging has been done in the most effective way is less certain.

The opening—a mass radiography of industrial workers, including the patient—is effective. His subsequent progress is followed in detail. Much of this—his arrival in the Out-patient department, his interview with the almoner, and more—is irrelevant, and could well be cut out entirely or, at most, briefly indicated by much shorter sequences. While our patient enjoys a cup of tea in bed, we tour the ward, inspecting other cases of various types of chest disease and are shown, briefly, their diagnosis and treatment. This section is very good, and more could have been made of it. A

more detailed description, in the commentary, of the technique of bronchography would have added to the value of that sequence.

In the course of investigation the patient is bronchoscoped, realistically enough. We see two remarkable diagrams of views down the bronchoscope but are brought to earth with a bump by a crude cartoon of the larynx accompanied, fatally, by the remark "The vocal cords are normal"! It would be so much better left out, or at least passed without comment. The doctors consult at length, as is entirely right and proper, but it would have been interesting to know their findings and how they were led to decide upon operation. Without this, the sequence is too long.

Preparation of the patient for operation is well done. The anaesthetic technique, without whose development such operations would not be possible, is dealt with mainly by some excellent diagrams. I feel that valuable detail has been sacrificed to the desire for continuity (the patient we see is not the one who actually undergoes the operation). The piece de resistance, the operation itself, is magnificent. The shots inside the chest, for instance, give a view that is seen, normally, only by the surgeon and, perhaps, by his first assistant. The surgical technique is faultless. The result is far and away the best description of an operation that I have ever come across, in cinematograph or any other medium, and this, alone, makes the film well worth while.

From these dizzy heights we fall once more to levels suitable rather for entertainment than for instruction and pass through some pretty scenes of rehabilitation centres, blossoming orchards and the like to our happy ending. The only gaffe—the patient walks off to the consulting room arm-in-arm with the sister—drew laughter and applause from the audience. Alan Howland wrestles nobly and, on the whole, successfully

## SIGHT and SOUND

A cultural Quarterly

### MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

appraising educational  
and  
entertainment values

Published by: The British Film Institute,  
4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

with the outlandish medical jargon of the commentary.

This is the most ambitious, and the most successful, medical documentary film yet produced, and all concerned are to be congratulated on a very real achievement. My criticism is based on the opinion with which many will disagree, that a more substantial and more impressive fare for a medical audience and, being less obvious, would be the more effective propaganda.

**Bill Jack v. Adolf Hitler.** March of Time. 17 mins.

*March of Time* re-enters the arena of controversy with several loud explosions in this latest issue. As a revelation of the fundamental simplicity of the American mind it would be hard to beat.

Bill Jack, a former Trade Union "business agent", now runs a factory of his own which has apparently astounded the whole U.S.A. with its production output. There are, in the film, very few signs of production at all—indeed the workers (who include some of the most glamorous girls it has ever been our good fortune to see) are far too busy (a) hooting late arrivals, (b) knocking off for doughnuts and coffee, (c) having their corns examined in the factory foot clinic, (d) listening to pep talks from the boss, (e) dancing at their machines to recorded jive, (f) reclining in steam baths, and (g) holidaying in Florida.

Despite all this we are informed that the 7,500 employees (called "associates") work twelve hours a day, seven days a week and just love it. After the war all the girls will be sacked and the mobilised men given back their jobs, and they love that too. This is to be understood, because "the management are brilliant mass psychologists who have succeeded in convincing the workers by unmistakable, concrete signs that they have their welfare at heart".

Our favourite scene was the Union shop steward accompanying the boss on a visit to tell some misguided worker that he was a dirty so-and-so for not pulling up his socks and co-operating with this paragon of employers.

It should be added that this is the best photographed American subject *March of Time* has produced for many months.

**Workers' Weekend.** Production: Crown Film Unit. Narrative by Officer of Royal Canadian Air Force. M.O.I. 13 mins.

*Subject:* The assembly of a Wellington bomber by aircraft workers in 23½ hours of their weekend spare time.

*Treatment:* Straightforward location shooting during the occurrence of the incident. The work was covered by several cameras. The commentary is done in radio eye-witness style, which helps the film to retain a vigorous quality of newsreel immediacy.

*Propaganda Value:* Indirectly good. Not so much because of the effect on morale of knowing that aircraft workers are prepared to give their own time to such a purpose, as because they are seen working with good comradeship and with pleasure in their craft. The films reminds us that, whether we like the fact or not, a great many documentary films stand or fall by the quality of their commentary. In *Workers' Weekend* the visuals are excellently shot and edited, but they are altogether conventional in style and pretty familiar in content. Neither does the commentary say or do anything revolutionary, but the

Canadian voice, speaking in an easy-going, colloquial, racy style, manages to give the narrative a warmth and intimacy which lifts the film out of the ruck. A passing reference to a worker glimpsed only for a fleeting close-up is sufficient to put us on good terms with this ex-hairdresser or merchant seaman.

Here is a film, successful because of its simplicity, which demonstrates the importance of film-makers cultivating their ears as well as their eyes.

**Before the Raid.** Production: Crown Film Unit.

*Producer:* Ian Dalrymple. *Direction:* Jiri Weiss.

*Camera:* E. Catford. M.O.I. 35 mins.

*Subject:* The looting of a Norwegian fishing village by the Germans; resistance by the Norwegians; German reprisals and the escape of some Norwegians to Britain. The story being told as a flash-back by Norwegians who are returning to Norway on a Commando raid.

*Treatment:* A well directed and occasionally exciting film. Good use of natural British resources for Norwegian background.

*Before the Raid* is a much better job than any of the studio Occupied-Europe films. It tells a simple story honestly, but only in one plane. The chase sequence in Norway and the small boat sequence in the North Sea, are fresh and exciting.

*Propaganda Value:* A simple film that should come as a relief to cinema audiences after the appalling Occupied-Europe muck they have had to sit through in the past.

**The Battle of Britain.** Production: U.S. War Dept. Special Division S.O.S. with co-operation of the Signal Corps. M.O.I. 1 hr.

*Subject:* The Battle of Britain; the fighting

qualities of the Royal Air Force; resistance of civilians to bombing.

*Treatment:* *The Battle of Britain* was made by Frank Capra especially for American soldiers coming to Britain. It deals fairly honestly but at great length with the history of Britain between May 1940 and May 1941. Nearly all the material comes from Ministry of Information films, and like most assembly jobs it is well cut. The actual blitz sequences tend to be too long for British audiences, but on the whole it is a clear, neat job.

*Propaganda Value:* It should help to improve Anglo-American relations, in this country. People always like to know that someone thinks well of them.

## Documentary News Letter

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

Owned and Published by

**FILM CENTRE LTD.**

34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1  
GERRARD 4253

## ★ For your information

IN every progressive enterprise there must be leaders and those who follow behind. As artistic and technical progress in cinematography quickens to the tempo and stimulus of war, "KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY" is always to be found "up-with-the-leaders", its well-informed pages radiating perception and far-sighted thinking. Kinematography's leaders themselves know this for truth and turn to "K.W." week by week for information and enlightenment.

**KINEMATOGRAPH  
WEEKLY**



93 LONG ACRE  
LONDON W.C.2

## Film Societies

The Manchester and Salford Film Society began its autumn session with *Lenin* in 1918. At the performance on November 21st Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevski* will be the principal film and there will also be some distinguished short films. The Hon. Secretary is R. Cordwell, 31 Cringle Road, Manchester, 19.

The Film Society of Ayrshire will hold eight ordinary and two repertory meetings both at Ayr and Kilmarnock during the present season. Among the films shown will be some early Disneys, some French, Russian, Dutch and American films and documentaries from Britain, Canada, America and Russia. The Hon. Secretary is Arthur J. Nelson, 6 Hilary Crescent, Ayr.

The Belfast Film Institute Society showed at its November meeting *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Later in the season will be shown Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, *The Blue Angel* and *L'Étrange M. Victor*. The membership Secretary is Miss Doreen McFetridge, 52 Donegall Place, Belfast.

The Aberdeen Film Society began its present season in October with a membership which has increased from 150 to 501. Afternoon and evening performances are being continued. At the November meeting *Derrière la Facade* was shown. *The Magnificent Ambersons* may be shown later on. The Secretary is Alice C. Hendry, 7 Queen's Terrace, Aberdeen.

The Devon and Exeter Film Society continues on a reduced scale, with sub-standard films. Meetings are held at the Visual Education Centre,

University College, Exeter. A season of eight shows includes the following features: *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*, *The Cheat*, *Nanook of the North*, *Kameradschaft*, *General Line*, *Jew Süss*, *South Riding*, *Film and Reality*, with supporting documentaries. Time is allowed for discussion. The Society co-operates intimately with the Film Council of the South-West.

The London Scientific Film Society's sixth season opened on 6th November. The programme included three Russian films, one on mechanical coal-mining in the Donetz Basin, and two dealing with the work of the Pavlov Institute for medical research in Moscow. There was also shown the first of the series of "research films" which the Society is screening this year. It was described in a talk by the producer, and illustrated the use of the cine camera in research—in this case to produce a slow motion colour study of stresses set up in a transparent plastic model section of a railway line. The programme concluded with *Neuro-Psychiatry*, the recent film on the treatment of war-time neuroses made for American medical audiences.

The Society's efforts in obtaining films such as the latter, not normally available to the public, is greatly to be commended. It has previously shown specimens of naval technical films and it is to be hoped that examples of the other two Services' work will be forthcoming.

Response to the Society's announcements this year reflects an immense interest in the scientific film. In fact, applications for membership have been so heavy that the Society has had regretfully to close the membership list for this season owing to limitations of theatre accommodation. Plans are however being made for operations on

a larger scale next year and full details of these will be published later.

The Dundee and St. Andrews Film Society has decided to show during the coming season some of the best American pictures, among them *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *All That Money Can Buy*, and *Winter set*. There will be some Continental films and also Russian films. A children's film show will be given on Sunday, December 26th. The Hon. Treasurer of this Society is G. A. Kinneir, 3 King's Road, Dundee.

The Film Council of the South-West continues to cater for the film needs of the South-West Region, in the non-theatrical field. Its area Film Library distributes films all over the region. At its headquarters (University College, Exeter), it provides information, advice, lectures and film shows for a great variety of bodies and individuals, educational, social, medical, national defence. The Film Council, together with the lectureship in Visual Education, and an Information Bureau, Reference Library and Education Laboratory constitute a Visual Education Centre. Teachers are trained, educational thought and discussion on modern media are promoted and research is carried on. A survey of existing visual materials of all types is being carried out. Readers of *D.N.L.* are invited to submit material (stills, film strips, illustrations—charts, catalogues, etc.) for this survey. A Saturday morning Film Forum for showing and discussing documentary and educational films has been organised. The Film Council will publish a Visual Bulletin describing the work in greater detail. Enquiries should be addressed to G. Patrick Meredith, Visual Education Centre, University College, Exeter.

GLASGOW

LONDON

introducing . . .

### RUSSELL PRODUCTIONS LTD.

188 St. Vincent Street  
Glasgow, C.2  
tel. CENTral 7670

and

39 Uphill Grove  
London, N.W.7  
tel. MILlhill 2612

LONDON

GLASGOW

# SHOOTING "Workers' Week-end"

by Ralph Elton

Crown Film Unit

THE Ministry of Information is often criticised in being behind the times with its film releases and unfortunately these criticisms bounce back on the film makers. As film makers we are only too conscious of the hold-ups in film-making caused by delay in script approval, facility granting, delays between the film's final completion and its release and all the rest of it; but, we are still to be criticised in our speed of production and there are people who do not fail to make the accusation.

Lately, the Crown Film Unit has had the opportunity of researching into the possibility of answering this accusation. There is not a complete answer but it has at least been proved that a proportion of "hot on the minute" films could be at the disposal of the Ministry of Information should they care to ask for them. The production of *Workers' Week-end* served as a useful pointer towards a method of procuring them in spite of the fact that this particular subject was about aeroplanes and some three years' old.

We found the subject for ourselves while we were researching into another film. The manager of an aircraft factory suggested that he would have a bomber built in thirty hours as an answer to Kaiser and his Liberty ships, provided that we would cover the operation with a camera. We undertook the challenge. We felt that we should offer our encouragement to the factory but we foresaw little more than a glorified newsreel item as a result of our work. The result was a very agreeable surprise, and what was more surprising still was that it should have come from a Unit that had been criticised more than most for its slowness.

At first sight it appeared that a director would be superfluous on this film. We were informed that no interference with the work on the record bomber could be tolerated. Personal direction of the cast was out and so were rehearsals. We were given a schedule for the building of the bomber and the approximate times and places at which the various operations would take place. Every facility in the way of mechanics of film making was offered but the shop stewards and the management were adamant on the point of not being "mucked up" during the actual job. "Hot" subjects will probably be closely tied to the national effort, and interference will not be welcome. This may well be the usual sort of thing that the "hot" film maker will have to face.

At this point there will be advocates for using camera only on this type of film, but this would inevitably lead to the making of an "item" as opposed to a film. The director has his function to fulfil although that function is very different from the normal. The usual arguments apply re continuity of thought, relation of one shot with the next and visualisation of the final film, but instead of the director adapting the schedule to his ideas he must adapt his ideas to the schedule.

He should, of course, know his subject visually to perfection and it may be possible—as it was with us—that he may be unable to study his subject action before shooting. A bomber being built in a hurry looks very different from one being built at the normal speed. If he cannot study his subject at first hand he must rely very largely

upon the descriptive powers of those employed on the location. Nevertheless the director must form a film conception and then bring his specialised knowledge to bear on the management's schedule. He must draw up a shooting schedule to dovetail perfectly with the management's. As far as film people are concerned it is a case of the tail wagging the dog. The subject and its schedule dictate to the film conception and the director's function becomes a case of juggling with the various schedules and making the very best of them to ensure that no filmic possibilities are unnecessarily wasted. It is all a matter of foresight and anticipation and when he has exercised these talents to the full the director can do no more than hope that it "all be all right on the night".

## One Set-up Ahead

It will probably not be all right on the night and the director will learn a lot about this new film technique to his cost. Our teething troubles were many. In the first hour's work there were some six takes on the main location, but the number of set-ups—including lamp shifting—was prodigious. Our trouble was that by the time we had set up for a shot, the process which we had intended to film would be over and finished and we would be left high and dry with nothing in front of the camera. If the director follows his normal practice and tries to stay with his camera while shooting he will attain nothing but valuable minutes lost in watching the camera moved and in peering through the finder. He should always be one set-up ahead and he should make sure that he is informed by some reliable person on the location of the filmic possibilities in the work to be done within the following half-hour. In the beginning we lost a number of action shots because we were not expecting them at the moment and because we could not set up in time to catch them. Again, the director's function is very largely a matter of anticipation. At the same time the camera man should be preparing ahead and leaving his operator in charge of the camera. In fact, there should be a representative of each department preparing the way ahead and the call on a unit is heavy. Although we represented two production units on *Workers' Week-end* we were doing the work of four. The electrical staff got the worst of it. They had to be in two places at once: with the two directors and chief camera-men ahead and with the two cameras behind. They were lighting some big stuff too. There were five main locations in the factory entailing five complete changes in power mains. We all know how long it normally takes to light a long shot in a factory. One very long shot was lit in something like ten minutes on this occasion. Fifteen electricians were none too many and their vast collection of lamps was not over-sufficient either.

There was one other departure from the normal routine of film making worth mention. We had a commentary writer on the location with us. In spite of the director's "script-cum-schedule" it was left to him to collect colourful word detail from the location. As we moved from one shot to the next he questioned the people we filmed and took notes of their names, their attitude, and any relevant details which in the end might give life and humanity to the finished film. This method of working in spontaneous and close co-operation

with the commentary writer proved extremely successful.

On the whole the management's schedule and the script-cum-shooting schedule worked out well in spite of the bomber being some six hours ahead of time and calling for some pretty hasty adaptations to the shooting schedule. We exposed more than ten thousand feet of film consisting of more than two hundred and fifty individual set-ups which gave us a show copy length of one thousand two hundred and fifty feet. The mechanics worked well from using an electric trolley as a kind of powered light carrying tripod to holding the camera in the hand. The script—what there was of it—came off. In the finished film the detail and the impressionistic stuff individually fell into line. The cut-aways and tricks worked. The climax, unbelievable as it seemed to us, was over shot. After three day's preparations and one day's shooting it looked as if "hot" films had been proved a possibility. The commentary was written up in the train on the way back to London and recorded within twenty-four hours of the last piece of film being exposed. There was a rough-cut within the fourth day and a show copy on the tenth in spite of there being a day's delay in sending the rushes into the laboratories and another before starting to cut.

## Film Societies (Cont.)

Edinburgh Film Guild has opened its fourteenth season with a record membership of over 1,500. During the summer an Exhibition of Film Décor was held and the Guild also took the initiative during the autumn in arranging for the formation of an Edinburgh Scientific Film Society. A performance of scientific films was given.

The season opened on October 17 with *Le Bonheur* (Marcel L'Herbier), *High Over the Borders* (Canada), *Common Cause* (M. of I.), and *Western Daze* (George Pal). On October 30 *My Universities* (G. rki) was shown with *Danger Area* (M. of I.) and *Spanish Fiesta* (Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo). On November 14 Sir John Orr and Paul Rotha were present and spoke during the performance of *World of Plenty*. The programme also included *Thunder over Mexico*, which can now be seen free from controversial complication, and Massingham's *In Which We Live* (M. of I.).

Plans include the showing of a group of Polish films by Eugene Cekalski in December and feature films booked are *Burgtheater* (November 28), *Derrière la Facade* (December 12), *La Fin du Jour* (January 9), and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (January 23).

The Guild has taken new office premises at 21 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2, and while Forsyth Hardy is in London, Agnes Smith is acting as Interim Hon. Secretary.

The Merseyside Film Institute Society held its annual general meeting on August 4th and re-elected W. Lyon Bleas as chairman, T. F. Wilson as Honorary Secretary, and A. E. Harrison as Honorary Treasurer.

The new season opened on October 8th with the performance of *L'Esclave Blanche*. A poll was taken at the show to assist the committee in choosing next year's programme. Out of seven films *La Fin du Jour* came out on top, with *Citizen Kane* in second place. The remaining shows this year were *My Universities* in November and *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* in December.



# Sound on Documentaries Could be Improved

by Ken Cameron

*Crown Film Unit*

As a documentary sound engineer I have more than once been disconcerted by people who bluntly ask: "Why is the sound on your films so bad?" or who perhaps say: "I never seem to be able to hear what the characters in some of your films are saying." It is humiliating and exasperating when one hears such remarks; particularly so when one realises that more often than not they are absolutely true. The offer of a little space in DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER seemed to me to be an admirable opportunity for saying some things to the documentary film world as from a pulpit; for turning the lame defence that inevitably is the technician's reply to lay criticism into a direct attack upon some of the methods of the documentary producers. Many of the films for the sound of which I have been responsible have unsatisfactory sound tracks. I know that more than anybody. But I resent deeply the comparisons which are so often made between our semi-intelligible dialogue and the smooth crisp sparkle of, say, the average American film. I envy intensely, and shall always try to imitate, the polish that is almost always there.

Some time ago DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER printed an article specifically damning the appalling level of intelligibility that characterises the average M.O.I. non-theatrical show. Perhaps it was this article that inspired discussions that began to take place. The object of these discussions was, of course, to locate and remove the causes of the trouble. Many of them are technical. They are problems that should all be soluble. Any sound engineer, when he knows that a film is to be played on inferior 16 mm. equipment in acoustically impossible halls, can, and generally will, make obvious little modifications to his re-recording technique. He will perhaps harden up the speech, open up the range between dialogue and the background, and so on. He should, I think, prepare thereby a second sound negative which will be used for all prints, both standard and sub-standard, intended for non-theatrical projection. Equally, provided he has the time and the necessary information, he will bear that slight but firm pressure upon the laboratory doing the work to ensure that dupe negative and prints are competently made. If he was very fortunate he might even have the opportunity of viewing a print or two at random to see that his instructions are being carried out. But in view of the pressure of work under which most of this country's sound departments are labouring at the moment, I feel that the main part of the work of laboratory supervision and print checking should be borne by the controlling distributor—generally the M.O.I. This work appears to have been done by them in the past with a singular lack of effectiveness. As a rule, however, the engineer who after all is ultimately held responsible for the quality of the sound, is not told that the film will be reduced to 16 mm.; he will not know what laboratory will handle this and other release work; he will certainly not be given the chance of ensuring that all his careful work is not ruined

by official negligence and technical incompetence. There will often be some commercial or political reason why the release printing of some short film must be done by a laboratory which has shown itself in the past to be unwilling or incapable of making a satisfactory job of the particular system of recording involved. At least that sort of thing has frequently been my experience. This, however, is only one side of the story. The other, and to my mind more important reason why some British documentary films merit adverse criticism of their sound tracks is purely the fault of those in charge of the production. The first and obvious example is their choice of actors for speaking parts. I am convinced that, at all costs, dialect, in the accepted sense of the word, should be avoided. The reasons are plain. Broad Suffolk is perhaps tolerated in East Anglia; it is laughed at in Scotland; in the Mid West U.S.A. it is not worth running. Recordists who after all are not born saboteurs, agree with their directors that the best person to play the part of a Cornish fisherman is a man who is at least connected intimately with both Cornwall and fish. Such realism is the life-blood of documentary. But in so many cases a more careful choice of artiste could result in a sound track that would satisfy all needs. So often tests are made, and principles chosen without

real regard to their diction, their accent, or their control of the spoken word. Provided the bloke has a roof to his mouth he'll do. And vague promises of subsequent post synchronisation are rarely kept. Fortunately I believe that these habits are waning. I believe that the documentary man is beginning to learn the lessons that were learnt by the commercial studios years ago.

Again, in many cases the location where many sequences are shot gives the recordist no opportunity to do good work. A reasonably quiet background is essential if the final track is to be controlled and smooth. The present day documentary is rapidly ceasing to be a simple commentary-music-effects affair. The sync. camera is much more to the fore than hitherto. And rightly so. But the methods of our directors must grow up with their ideas. The recordist must be regarded as an essential and valuable member of the production unit, and no longer as some sort of necessary evil. He should be consulted on artistes, on locations, on sets and on dialogue. Is this too much to ask? He will give valuable help and co-operation in the preliminary stages of a film. But he will expect similar co-operation from his director whilst on the floor. When the film is finished, the M.O.I., if it is to be released under their banner, should notify the studio concerned when they order dups and prints, and from which laboratory they order them. The sound engineer would thus have an opportunity of following his work through its final stages. The vast amount of footage now being processed for the M.O.I. theatrical and non-theatrical shows makes it increasingly hard to ensure first-class prints, but at least let us make some effort in the right direction.

## WORLD WIDE PICTURES LTD

*Producers of Documentary Films for:*

**THE WAR OFFICE**

**BRITISH COUNCIL**

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION**

**Etc. Etc.**

**JAMES CARR** *Managing Director*

**RALPH BOND** *Producer*

**52 SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, W.1**

**GERRARD 1736/7**

## FILM OF THE MONTH

**Victory through Air Power:** Released by United Artists, made by Disney Unit. With Major Alexander D. Seversky. 65 mins.

*Victory Through Air Power* is the perfect civilian armchair critic's guide to the war, particularly for those in the Eastern hemisphere.

Anyone who saw the real films of the last war such as *West Front 1918* or *All Quiet on the Western Front* is bound to remember the sequence in *All Quiet on the Western Front* where Lew Ayres on leave home again in Germany after four years in the trenches is so disgusted with what he finds at home that he hurries back to his comrades in the firing line before his leave is finished. Particularly good was the scene in the pub where he wanders aimlessly from table to table where the elderly civilians he once knew well have the war maps spread out before them and each one a perfect amateur strategist, each demonstrating with eager shouts the key to victory—Push on to Paris.

It would be interesting to know exactly how Disney came to be tied up with such a film: whether he undertook this work out of a profound political conviction or whether he is now open to every form of sponsorship. As far as technique is concerned, the film must have given his technicians a good many headaches. The first quarter is a quite successful attempt to give a flippant but good humoured picture in human terms of the progress of aviation from the Wright Brothers to the outbreak of the present war, but from then on it is our old mate, Major Seversky, giving a lecture on the strategy of the present war. There is quite a lot of the stuff we all know so well. Seversky sitting at desk. Seversky pointing at maps. Seversky wagging his finger at the audience. Seversky striding across the room to twiddle his technicolour globe. But most of it of necessity is diagram—sometimes animated diagram but often enough just plain diagram to illustrate the sales talk. And often it is no livelier and often a good deal duller than any diagram film that we have seen for the past fifteen years, though the bright colour, of course, lends an added touch to the rhetoric.

But taking the film as a whole, Disney has seen fit to plunge from his safe little nest of Christopher Robin and the Farmyard into the

boiling waters of political policy and world strategy and it is by those standards that the film must be judged, and by those standards the film is childish in the extreme, not likely to help anybody understand what this war means and only too well calculated to encourage the "push on to Paris" school. Seversky's and the film's main thesis is that the Allies, because of their long, difficult and dangerous supply lines, are foolish to try to compete weight for weight and weapon for weapon with the enemies' short interior lines and their reliance should be placed almost exclusively on giant long-range bomber and fighter airplanes to devastate the enemy's industrial centres. This thesis as expounded, sounds completely unconvincing, and as illustrated on the screen, becomes positively childish.

To take only a few examples: the statement is made that the island of Crete rather than Gibraltar or Malta now dominates naval strategy in the Mediterranean through its land-based aircraft. You wonder why such an absurd statement should be made until you come shortly afterwards in the film to the fact that Crete was captured by the use of air power alone. Similarly it is without evidence or foundation claimed that Norway was taken and the Maginot Line broken solely by the use of air power and that it was only the local ascendancy of the R.A.F. (rather than the ill-conceived German concentration on the German drive to Paris) which permitted Dunkirk. By this time the trend of the fake argument is clear and we can hardly be surprised when the Battle of Britain is presented as a victory for eight-gun Spitfires over one-gun Junkers 87's (which I believe scarcely appeared over Britain after the first few days) whilst the civilian victory over the night bombing of London, Coventry, etc.—the first real try-out and failure of Seversky's strategy—is totally and significantly ignored. By now the effect of the diagrams has become just comic and we are privileged to witness through the diagram some of Seversky's pet bogymen—U-boats which need not venture near the surface, whose torpedoes cannot miss their target, rocket-boosted bombs which pierce the concrete U-boat pens like paper (we are not told how they make the bomb hit the pen in the first instance), giant 10-ton bombs which burrow deep underground and cause major earthquakes for miles around!

I don't know how he came to overlook the idea of dropping giant bombs into Vesuvius to blow up Italy and in any case I much prefer my own ideas of electrifying the sea as a weapon against U-boats and of driving a giant tunnel, completely undermining and blowing up Germany as an effective finish to the land war. After seeing a diagram of the German war machine represented as a wheel with Allied attacks as arrows making vain thrusts against the hub, until our pal's bombers pour over and annihilate the hub at which the whole wheel shrivels up, you are bound to reflect that simply by altering the draughtsmen's orders, bombs could have been made just as effectively to bounce off the hub and the arrows to go piercing through the hub and spokes.

But much more than all this technical nonsense is the generally pernicious attitude to the war which the film propagates. Surely in the U.S.A. the man in the street is a little nearer to the facts of war than this. The whole business is presented like the Douglas Social Credit Plan by which, through the adoption of some one man's scientific technique, all the nasty mess can be painlessly avoided. Anyone who has been in or near a war or has taken part in any really worth-while human activity must know that the real thing—the agony, bloodshed, the hunger, the disillusionment and most important of all, the long wearing grind of the plain hard work without which nothing worth having is ever achieved—cannot so easily be by-passed. It is the real criticism of Disney and of this film that they should have lent such complacent hand to this pernicious doctrine. It is a pity to find in this film, the American film business slipping so easily into place inside the particular brand of fascism which the American technocrats are so busily building up. Somebody ought to tell Disney (never mind Seversky—nobody cares 'tuppence about him) that large-scale bombing did not beat British war production, that it is people in the end and not fancy machines that win wars and finally, and most important of all, that neither the U.S.S.R. nor China, nor damme, if it comes to that, even the British people, are going to be pleased with the prospect of wasting their people and their creative energy year after year until Seversky's fancy "made in America" toys are ready to take over and show them how it should be done.

## UNITED MOTION PICTURES

(LONDON) LTD.

are proud to announce that they have perfected a system of 16mm direct recording, which has been unanimously acclaimed by the experts

*We hope that it will be our pleasure to demonstrate these recordings to you.*

STUDIO AND SUB-STANDARD PREVIEW THEATRE  
24 DENMARK STREET - LONDON W.C.2

Temple Bar 7525 & 3868

# THE ASS AND THE NIGHTINGALE



An Ass happened to see a Nightingale one day, and said to it: "Listen, my dear. They say you have a great mastery over song. I have long wished to prove if your talent is so great as they say." On this the Nightingale began to show her art; whistled in countless ways, sobbed sustained notes, passed from one song to another; at one time let her voice die away, and echoed the distant murmur of the reed; at another time poured through the wood a shower of tiny notes. There was no one that did not listen to the song; the breezes died away, the birds were hushed, the cattle lay down on the grass; scarcely breathing, the Shepherd revelled in it, and only now and then as he listened did he smile on the shepherdess.

At length the singer ended. Then the Ass, bending its head towards the ground, observed:

"It's tolerable. To speak the truth, one can listen to you without feeling weary. But it's a great pity you don't know our Cock. You would sing much better if you were to take a few lessons from him."

---

REALIST FILM UNIT  
34 SOHO SQUARE, W.1

Telephone: GERRARD 1958

## Correspondence

DEAR SIRS,

May I ask your reviewer of *The Silent Village* some open questions:

(1) Since when has the line of "This might have been you" had no propaganda value? I know few better ways of bringing tragic or political facts home to people.

(2) In order to work out this line, did Humphrey Jennings take the trouble to live and work with and understand a mining community, or did he not?

(3) As a result, did he or did he not in his film give a fair impression of a mining community, and so put across the idea of "This might have been you" to a large section of the British people?

I suggest that whatever intellectual arguments there may be against *The Silent Village* there is here much positive achievement and much that only Jennings could have done. I know one or two of the people whom the Crown Film Unit worked with in South Wales and I suspect I know mining communities in general better than your reviewer. I talked to one of the principals after the shooting was finished, and I know that it was a fair fight while it lasted, and that in the end the miners Jennings worked with respected him and his unit, and that the unit respected the miners. The picture that came out of it all had far more than "occasional moments of feeling". It was an honest co-operative attempt to imagine a situation which is almost unimaginable. Did they aim too high? Did they in many ways fail to arrive? I saw the film in Sheffield (a city surrounded by coal-mines incidentally) and I felt that it was a success; it was accepted, it was not dismissed as phoney. There are many things in the film that I for one would prefer to have done differently, but let us give credit for an honest and sincere attempt to do something more difficult than most of us ever dare to undertake.

Yours faithfully,

DONALD ALEXANDER

**LONDON  
SCIENTIFIC  
FILM  
SOCIETY**

1943-4  
SEASON

Shows at Imperial Institute Theatre,  
S. Kensington, 4 p.m. on the following  
Saturdays: 11 December 1943

15 January 1944

19 February 1944

25 March 1944

Details:-

The Secretary, 73 High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

# D. N. L. VOL. IV INDICES

## (I) ARTICLES AND BOOK REVIEWS

*Reviews of Books are indicated by an asterisk.*

As Others See Us, 197

British Film Role in America, 173  
British Films Instruct New York Gardeners, 201

Casting "Nine Men" (Harry Watt), 179  
Catalogue of M.O.I. Films: See: Ministry of Information.  
Cracked Voice of Propaganda, The, 187  
Correspondence, 171, 184, 192, 206, 232

Documentary Developments in America (Donald Slesinger), 203

Film Board of Canada, 167  
Film in Education, The (R. S. Miles), 176  
Film Progress in the Sciences, 210  
Film Sense, The\* (S. M. Eisenstein), 218  
Film Societies, 208, 228  
Films and People (U.S.A.), 172  
Films for Re-occupied Europe, 198  
Films for the Community in Wartime\* (Mary Losey), 206  
Films of the Month, 179, 189, 200, 219, 231  
First Documentalist, The (Sgt. James Dugan), 190

Hollywood v. Britain, 212

It Won't be Done by Kinship, 161

Kicking Against the Pricks, 185

Letter from New Zealand (E. S. Andrews), 164  
Letter to Documentary: A. (Arthur Elton), 207

Man and Boy\* (Sir Stephen Tallents), 205

Ministry of Information  
Catalogue of Films made and acquired from July 1st till December 31st, 1942, 192  
U.S. Non-Theatrical distribution, 1941-2, 177  
Money behind the Films, The (Henry Fullerton), 222  
Movies are Important to Russia, 217

New Democracy, The, 162

New Documentary Films, 165, 181, 191, 202, 215, 226

Notes of the Month, 163, 175, 186, 199, 212, 225

Photographic Optics\* (Arthur Cox), 218

Scientific Films, 219

Scientific Films in War-Time, 206

Shooting "Workers' Week-end" (Ralph Elton), 229

60 Films a Month on Science and War (Peter Furst), 217  
Sound on Documentaries could be Improved (Ken Cameron), 230  
Soviet Technical and Instructional Films, 169  
St. K. Rationing and Film Trailers, 208  
Story of a Russian Movie Man (Feodor Bunimovich), 204  
Story Telling among Film Workers, 168

Take Heed for Tomorrow, 221

These are the Men (Dylan Thomas), 174

They Laugh at Realism (Roger Manvell), 188

What We are Working for, 209

Workers' Film Association, The (J. Reeves), 183

## (2) NAMES OF PEOPLE

*Signed articles and letters are indicated by an asterisk.*

Alexander, Donald, 191, 225, 232\*  
Allred the Great, 176  
Allen, A. G., 214  
Alwyn, William, 182, 200, 215, 216, 220  
Anderson, Max, 226  
Andrews, E. S., 163\*  
Angelina, Pasha, 170  
Anakin, Ken, 181  
Anstey, Edgar, 182, 202, 215, 226  
Antonov, Leonid, 170, 217  
Archibald, George, 184  
Aquin, Anthony, 215, 216  
Astaire, Fred, 186  
Ayres, Lew, 231

Bach, J. S., 218  
Baines, John, 182  
Balcon, Michael, 179, 214  
Barlow, Roger, 172  
Barrington, J. M., 179  
Barry, Iris, 201  
Basil, Elain, 172  
Bax, Sir Arnold, 170  
Bazkin, 169  
Beadle, Sidney, 225  
Beddington, Jack, 210  
Berry, Wallace, 180, 188  
Bell, Geoffrey, 212, 161\*  
Bergford, M. W., 206\*  
Beskov, S., 169  
Beveridge, Sir William, 161, 162, 199, 205

Blaise, W. Lyon, 229  
Blewett, W., 180  
Bond, Ralph, 182  
Borer, M., Cathcart, 226  
Broschi, Bertold, 217  
Bryan, Julian, 172  
Bruckenhof, 170  
Bundy, Frank, 225  
Bunimovich, Feodor, 204\*  
Burdenko, 169  
Burnham, Lord, 210  
Cameron, Ken, 230\*  
Campbell, Comdr., 166  
Capra, Frank, 203  
Carrick, Edward, 200  
Cass, Henry, 181  
Cattford, E., 225  
Cattling, D., 181  
Cavalcanti, Alberto, 179, 180, 186, 196\*  
Cekalski, Eugene, 229  
Chernyshev, Major, 204  
Chiang Kai Shek, 199  
Chudakov, Y. A., 170  
Churchill, Robert, 172  
Churchill, Winston, 197, 210  
Cooper, Budge, 181  
Cooper, Gaty, 198  
Cordwell, R., 228  
Corbuser, 182  
Courtault, Stephen, 223  
Coward, Noel, 163  
Cox, Arthur, 217, 218\*  
Cox, Jack, 215  
Craven, Marcel, 172  
Crawford, Merritt, 190  
Crosby, Bing, 198  
Cross, Eric, 181  
Currie, Finlay, 202

Dali, Salvador, 182  
Dalrymple, Ian, 227  
Dalton, Hugh, 224  
Daniels, Bebe, 165  
Darlan, Admiral, 161  
Davidson, J. D., 212  
Davies, Bettie, 186  
da Vinci, Leonardo, 218  
Davis, Elmer, 213  
de Gaulle, General, 199  
de la Mare, Walter, 205  
de Lantour, Charles, 215  
Del Giudice, F., 224  
de Marney, Derek, 181  
Demchenko, Maria, 170  
de Seignin, Madame, 182  
Deutsch, Oscar, 222  
D'Eyncourt, Walter T., 210  
Dickinson, Thorold, 211  
Dobb, Henry, 225  
Doulsen, A. Reginald, 226  
Doublier, Francis, 190  
Dovshenko, 217  
Dubinsky, 170  
Dugan, Sgt. James, 190\*  
Dugmore, 182

Easterbrook, L. F., 216  
Eden, Anthony, 199  
Edison, Thomas, 190  
Eisenstein, S. M., 218, 228  
El Greco, 218  
Elliott, 166  
Elton, Arthur, 207\*, 220  
Elton, Ralph, 229  
Elton, Raymond, 182, 215  
Emmett, E. V. H., 181, 216

Farrow, Leslie, W., 222  
Fedoseyev, 204  
Ferno, John, 172  
Feyder, J., 189  
Field, Mary, 176, 225  
Fitzpatrick, 165  
Flaherty, Robert, 164, 168, 172  
Flanagan, Aubrey, 225  
Fletcher, Paul, 210  
Fletcher, Yvonne, 216  
Ford, John, 203  
Ford, Richard, 172  
Fowle, Chick, 216, 225  
Franklin, Benjamin, 200  
Frend, Charles, 180  
Fraghen, Peter, 168  
Frieze-Green, C., 190  
Fullerton, Henry, 222\*  
Furst, Peter, 217\*  
Fyfe, Will, 188

Gable, Clark, 203  
Galkin, 169  
Gall, 169  
Garson, Greer, 186  
Giraud, General, 199  
Girolan, 169  
Glenning, Raymond, 165  
Goebbels, Joseph, 162, 174, 196  
Goring, Marius, 174, 196

Gogol, 218  
Goodlife, Frank, 225  
Gorka, Maxim, 190, 229  
Grant, Morry, 166  
Grékov, 170  
Grierson, John, 161, 164, 167, 175, 179, 186, 212  
Grierson, Ruby, 225  
Gropius, 182  
Haldane, J. B. S., 170  
Hankinson, Michael, 165  
Hardy, Forsyth, 229  
Harper, Alan, 181  
Harrison, A. E., 229  
Hartley, Irving, 172  
Hartnell, Norman, 179  
Hauchofer, 162  
Hawes, Stanley, 225  
Hawkes, Howard, 212  
Hay, Roy, 181  
Hayes, Helen, 168  
Hecht, Ben, 168  
Hendry, Alice C., 228  
Herbert, Brian, 195  
Hess, Rudolf, 174, 175, 196  
Hitler, Adolf, 162, 163, 174, 175, 181, 196, 219, 227  
Hudson, J. L., 189  
Hope, Bob, 186  
Huill, Cordell, 199  
Hunt, John, 211  
Hunter, Rosanne, 202  
Hunter, William, 175  
Hurwicz, Leo, 172  
Huxley, Aldous, 180  
Huxley, Julian, 166

Ivens, Joris, 172

Jack, Bill, 227  
Jackson, Gordon, 180  
Jago, Jo, 166, 225  
Jeakins, A. E., 165, 181, 202, 225, 226  
Jennings, Humphrey, 200, 207, 216, 232  
Joad, C. E. M., 116  
Jones, Jonah, 215, 225

Kaiser, Henry, 229  
Kapita, 170  
Kapler, Alexei, 217  
Karlin, 169  
Karmen, Roman, 217  
Kasatkin, Pavel, 172  
Keating, Geoffrey, 210  
Kerns, Ralph, 181, 182, 215  
Keltner, Alice, 172  
Kerkow, Herbert, 172  
Kerner, Ben, 172  
Kimberley, Paul, 194, 208  
Kinnear, G. A., 228  
Kissack, Robert, 172  
Knight, Eric, 163, 216  
Koestler, Arthur, 165  
Korda, Sir Alexander, 214  
Kosmodemianskaya, 217  
Kotovsky, 217

Lambert, Jack, 179  
Lauste, Eugene, 190  
Lawrence, D. H., 200  
Labedev, V. N., 169  
Lee, Jack, 215  
Lee, Jenny, 166  
Legg, Stuart, 167, 172  
Lejeune, C. A., 179  
Lenin, V. I., 161, 169  
Lerner, Irvine, 172  
L'Herbier, Marcel, 229  
Lincoln, Abraham, 213  
Lindenberg, Paul, 222  
Loew, 223  
Lorentz, Pare, 203  
Losey, Mary, 206  
Low, David, 219  
Luke, Lord, 222  
Lukhtikov, Col., 204  
Lumière Brothers, 190  
Lupino, Ida, 186  
Lusk, Norbert, 172  
Lye, Len, 165  
Lyon, Ben, 165  
Lysenko, 170

MacAlister, S., 216  
MacArthur, Charlie, 168  
MacCullough, Donald, 166  
MacDonald, David, 210  
McDougall, 182  
McFledge, Doreen, 228  
MacGowan, Kenneth, 203  
McKechnie, James, 195  
MacKendrick, 182  
Mackinder, 162  
Mallison, Miles, 216  
Mander, Kay, 202  
Manvell, Roger, 188\*



**(\*) ADVERTISERS**

Films of Great Britain, 166  
G.B. Instructional, 207  
Kinematograph Weekly, 170, 178, 191, 205,  
219, 227  
London Scientific Film Society, 232  
Paul Rotha Productions, 216  
Realist Film Unit, 172, 183, 196, 201, 216,  
232  
Russell Productions, 228

Sight and Sound, 167, 180, 190, 203, 215,  
226  
Strand Film Company, The, 171, 184, 195,  
208, 220  
United Motion Pictures, 231  
World Wide Pictures, 230





Master 1144



300107235



